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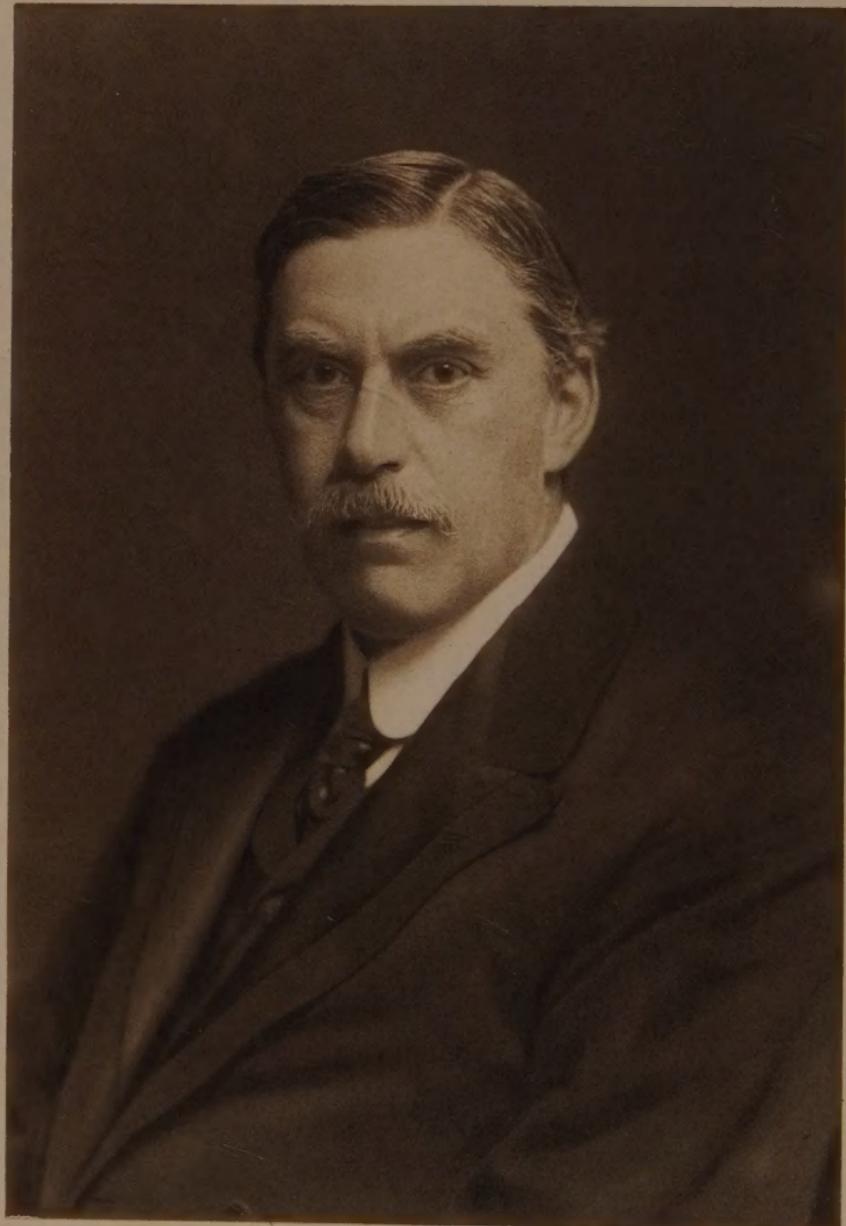


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Yours very sincerely

C. Silvester Jones

PULPIT, PLATFORM AND PARLIAMENT

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BY THE REV.

C. SILVESTER HORNE, M.A., M.P.

ILLUSTRATED

HODDER AND STOUGHTON
LONDON NEW YORK TORONTO

Printed in 1913

TO

MY WIFE

TO MY READERS

TEN busy years in many fields of activity are not, perhaps, sufficient justification for so personal a book as this. But when I began to write down some of the events that have interested me most, and to share with others some of the responsibilities that have burdened me, there seemed to be no escape from the personal pronoun. May I ask you to believe that it has been with no desire to obtrude my own personality, but because the case I was anxious to present could not well be put in any other way? As the book passes out of my hands I am acutely conscious that it gathers up only a few fragments of ten

memorable years. There is little or nothing told here of the work among children, of the *crèche*, of the club-work for girls, of the Boys' Brigade, of the house-to-house visitation of the Sisters, and a hundred-and-one other activities, each of which deserves to be chronicled. But, after all, this is not the history of that Central Mission of which I have been Superintendent. It is a discussion of many problems that the work of that mission has emphasised; and especially the relations of the Church and the State, Religion and Politics. Whether a minister of religion ought to be at the same time a member of Parliament is only one small question which admits of many replies. But we cannot get away from the fact that the whole problem of Church and State is being re-argued; and while some are eager to withdraw the churches more absolutely from political interests, others are arguing that the State will not be the gainer but the loser

if that influence is withdrawn. I am certain the Church will have to face this matter out, and make up her mind.

The crudity of her negations or affirmations is not to her credit. The one certain conclusion that is being drawn is that she has no settled policy because she has no clear conviction. She only recognises that the relationship that once existed between Church and State is over. We cannot reproduce in modern times the authority of Hildebrand or Calvin, or Knox, any more than we can maintain the theory of Hooker. But are we driven to the conclusion that Christianity, with craven heart and be-draggled banners, is to retreat from the field where she was once triumphant, but which she dares to occupy no longer? Is this the situation, and can nothing retrieve it? This is not a question of little consequence. To some of us it is the gravest of all questions. This book is written to prove how deeply

enshrined in some hearts is the ideal of a Mother Church, to whom nothing that is human can ever be alien, and with whose progress the hope of regeneration for our social order is bound up.

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CHAPTER I

THE UNACCOMPLISHED MISSION

IN Dr. Hatch's great book on *The Organisation of the Early Christian Churches* there is a sentence from which I have never been able to escape: *The unaccomplished mission of Christianity is to reconstruct society on the basis of brotherhood.* Nominally Christianity is in authority in Europe to-day. It is when we think of this that we realise the bitter irony of the actual situation. What basis of brotherhood has been supplied? The Roman, the Greek and the Lutheran Churches are still anathema to one another. As if Protestantism were not weak enough already, it is sharply divided within its own borders. Rationalism and Indifferentism

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thrive on the quarrels of the Churches; and the strength and simplicity of primitive Christianity is seldom found.

Again, the so-called Christian nations, so far from being provided with a basis of brotherhood, are arming year by year more formidably against one another. Frowning fortresses stand as hospitable sentinels over the gateways of every Christian people. The diplomatic world is shot through with suspicion and jealousy. The frontiers everywhere bristle with bayonets. The talk is less of universal brotherhood than of universal conscription. The people concerned are powerless in the grip of their rulers. The democracies cannot grasp one another's hands. Like clumsy, ungainly giants, they are compelled to dig and delve and drill, and the profits of their labour are the spoil of the rich and the powerful. These multitudes, whom the wealthy and the clever govern in the name of freedom and justice, are pro-

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foundly uneasy. Their unrest is evidenced in occasional explosions of anger and blind revolt. But they have themselves helped to provide the military power that holds them in check; and in the long run the underpaid father on strike may be shot down by the soldier son. Such is the triumph of military discipline. Thus the people who confess the name of Christ are taught to regard each other as enemies, not as friends; and the octopus armament companies (unlimited) naturally love to have it so. The consequence of all this is that the condition of Europe is a seeming advertisement of the failure of Christianity. The Christian Church has a more difficult task before her than the decadent Roman Empire presented if she is to reconstruct this society on the basis of brotherhood, and substitute co-operation for competition, and federalism for selfish individualism. Yet, unless she can bring this about, she must be reckoned among

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the spent forces. If she cannot overcome international bigotries and enmities, she must give way to some other spiritual force which can and will. I repeat, she must do this or die. It is her unaccomplished mission.

Neither is the problem before her merely one of substituting relations of friendship for relations of hostility among the nations. The lines of cleavage run deep between class and class, man and man, even where they hail the same flag and rejoice in the same race. Nationalism is, no doubt, a great and binding force; but it has never yet humanised the relations of capital and labour; and when it has adopted and imposed one type of worship and creed in the name of nationality, it has inevitably lent its sanction to intolerance and inequity, and has exaggerated rather than healed social divisions. Our own country is the home of caste feeling—the territorial caste, the military caste, the literary

caste, the university caste, the professional caste, the ecclesiastical caste, and many another. It is common knowledge that this stupid caste feeling runs down through the poorer strata of society. The clerk looks down on the artisan. The silk hat, however frayed, and the frock coat, however worn, cover a pride which would not for worlds be associated with the tweed cap or the suit of corduroy. Yet all the while, as the veriest novice in social questions can see for himself, we all live on one another's labour. When any one of us rises in the morning and puts a lump of coal upon his fire, he does not see the face of the miner who hewed it out of the seam, or the haulier whose labour brought it to the surface; but none the less these men are brothers of his, and but for their toil his children had gone cold. When he cuts a slice of bread he does not see the face of the agricultural labourer who in all weathers ploughed the land, and sowed the seed, and

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reaped the harvest; but this labourer is a brother, and but for his travail the children would have gone hungry. When he looks out of his window he does not see the face of the workman at St. Helens who made that glass at the furnace mouth, but the glass-worker is a brother, and but for his sweat and toil the house had been dark. We all live for one another; and of all the follies with which humanity has been cursed, this vice of social snobbishness and vulgar pride, be it hereditary, educational, professional or mercenary, is the most unintelligent and the least pardonable. When we are asked whether we are visionary enough to imagine that such lines of distinction can be obliterated, we reply that this is just one of those problems that test the sincerity and the value of the Church. If she cannot produce in this social order a spirit of brotherhood; if she cannot create a sense of kinship which no difference of fortune or estate can weaken; if she cannot

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teach mankind that the snob and the prig are as great an evil as the toady or the hooligan whom they inevitably produce; let her frankly say so, and abdicate. Some spiritual power must be found to unify society. Christianity must do it or die. It is her unaccomplished mission.

To those of us who believe that the Church of Christ is still the real, if unacknowledged, mistress of the world, and who do not despair of her fulfilling her destiny, the lines of cleavage that run everywhere through society are at once a reproach and a challenge. We are told that no practical person ignores these cleavages, and that to do so is to run your head against a stone wall. Slowly and sadly society seems to have made up its mind that certain prejudices are in the nature of things, and therefore eternal. That they happen to be anti-Christian is a misfortune; but we must make shift to get along with a maimed Christianity in our social order. Human

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nature is too strong for Christ; and even the Churches, though with shame, have decided that it is more prudent and practicable to side with human nature. Here and there bright spirits, wearied of the sham and futility of it, break through the crust of convention, and are content to pay the penalty. They are the enfranchised souls for whom classes and races do not exist as divisive boundaries. They find themselves in touch with the universal; and the largeness of the brotherhood into which they enter is more than sufficient compensation for any social stigma they may have to bear. But even in the bosom of the Church which was born to bridge these gulfs and to establish the unity of humanity, such forward spirits are viewed often with misgiving, fear or compassion. To the statesman, so-called, their influence is to be dreaded, because they are believed to chill patriotism; and modern international politics are built on the commandment, "Thou shalt

love thine own country, and be suspicious of all others." Yet it may well be urged that the votaries of this shrine do not even love their own countrymen. The intensity of our insularity does nothing to abolish snobbishness and caste prejudice. It appears to one at times as if the Church's first great battle within her own borders will be her last. We still read as "lessons" to our people the great chapters in which Paul vindicates his universal policy against narrow Jewish pride and prejudice. The struggle for the rights of the many against the privilege of the few is as old as that; and nobody will be audacious enough to argue that it is over. What the Gentile was to the Jew two thousand years back, the foreigner is to multitudes of English people, the tradesman to multitudes of professional people, the Nonconformist to multitudes of State Churchmen. It is indeed significant that we have still to rally round Paul's standard, and challenge the Petrine

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heresy that in the first century would have wrecked the progress of the Church, and emasculated Christianity.

The pity is that the very people who are most widely severed are those who most need one another. In the abstract we recognise this; and the laborious efforts that we make to bring the two worlds together is like elaborate, artificial introductions between two people who are conscious that they have little or nothing in common. So we dose the East End with Oxford—in small quantities—and occasionally dose Oxford with the East End; and many uncomfortable hours result, and we trust some kindly feeling is gendered. It is all worth doing; and if it is the best we can manage, things being as they are, there is nothing for it but to try to increase the dose gradually. But the fact that we have to work people up to the point of plunging into the East End as into an unknown foreign country shows where we are. Things have

got desperately wrong with us when this is the case. Our cities of the rich, and cities of the poor know each other little, and probably care for each other less. Kensington is far more at home in Paris than in Hoxton. The picturesque poverty of Italy has a charm for Westminster such as Somers Town can never possess.

Quite recently a Chinese newspaper published some pictures of London slumdom. The articles describing them had for headings, "These are the fruits of Christianity! Do we want them in China?" So Whitechapel, or Bermondsey, or St. Pancras, may injure Christianity in Pekin. The dark places in Edinburgh or Glasgow, the notorious Floodgate area in Birmingham, are flung into the scale against the religion of Christ in the world's newest republic. We take the field against the monstrous caste systems of India; we indict them in the name of Christ, whose example and authority are

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daily flouted in our own land of social and ecclesiastical divisions. Cynics accuse us of being enthusiastic to dislodge the mote from the eye of every other nation; and indeed it is wonderful that we can see their motes at all when the beam in our own eye is so lamentably large. Yet we cannot help observing that the United States is still in the grip of fierce racial prejudice; and, so far as I can see, the coloured population, even in its most capable representatives, is having a harder struggle for justice than in any year since the great Emancipation. Yet America must make good her proud boast as the mother of freedom, or lose her saving idealism. The real danger that threatens her is the ancient danger that nearly wrecked the Christian barque at the beginning of her splendid voyage.

Ten years ago I left Kensington and was charged by my fellow Congregationalists in London with the conduct of operations from

one of the best strategic centres in the Metropolis. The place had notable historical associations, for Whitefield's Church in the Tottenham Court Road stands on the site purchased by the Countess of Huntingdon for the great evangelist, the marks of whose ministry are on America and England unto this day. After some heart-breaking years the handful of gallant supporters was almost at the end of its strength, and quite at the end of its resources. Burdened by a load of debt, they were sorely tempted to sell their valuable property, and build a new memorial church in some rising district. The palpable fact, however, was, and is, that this site is one of the finest in modern London for the bold enterprises suggested by Evangelical and Social Christianity. Might it not be used as the ground for a unique experiment, to house beneath its roof all classes that dwell in our cosmopolitan neighbourhood, to fuse them with a common passion for social service, and

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inspire them with the vision of a regenerate London?

These were the questions that suggested themselves when we first surveyed that fascinating area which contains every problem that London presents. The ceaseless procession of young life from the country to our great business thoroughfare, there to gain a London experience, and not seldom to lose in the transaction more than they gain, is the first fact that interests one. Secondly, there confronts us the weird agglomeration of nationalities that inhabit our streets to the west. Thirdly, there is the huge industrial district of Camden Town stretching to the north of the Euston Road. Fourthly, the literary, artistic, and theatrical Bohemianism of Bloomsbury. In addition we are always in the presence of the life-and-death struggles in our mammoth hospitals; while much of our disjointed university life goes on around our doors. To this comprehensive world we had

to interpret, as best we could, the Christian ideal. We had to preach cohesion and community to those whose orbits seldom or never intersected. Above all we had to proclaim our belief that chronic poverty and organised vice are not necessary features in the life of any city.

The date of our new experiment was significant. The terrible South African War had just reached its inglorious close. The bitter racialism that was the venomous root from which that deadly fruit sprang was seen, in the retrospect, for what it was. Once it had masqueraded as patriotism; but now that banner and trumpet, "the tumult and the shouting," had passed, it was recognised as nothing nobler than what is sometimes called "human nature with the paint off." England found herself bereft of thousands of her bravest sons, with a vast load of debt, and the wholesome realisation that this is the price we pay for sitting in the seat of the scornful.

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The nation recovered its sanity. It was once again possible to speak about our own sins and follies, without meeting the response of a contemptuous pharisaism. Everywhere men and women were asking whether Christian nations were justified in shedding blood to establish one form of racial ascendancy. Nor had the denial of the spirit of brotherhood brought disaster to South Africa alone. The Education Acts of 1902 and 1903 had given enormous State-subsidies to sacerdotal schools, and had been celebrated by a famous Cardinal as "a triumph over the Nonconformists." It was the day when politics had resolved themselves into the means whereby one class in the community could "triumph over" and trample upon other classes. The police courts were full of Free Churchmen summoned as defaulters for non-payment of the rate which was the symbol of the triumph of their opponents. Not for more than two centuries had the wounds which Statesmen

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and Churchmen ought to heal been so deliberately aggravated. Everything tended to emphasise the problem of problems. Only equal justice between man and man could avert military or social strife, whether at home or abroad. Was it possible to create the spirit that would give us a citizenship intent on such ends of justice and peace?

This is not written merely to recall memories of ten years ago. But all who took any part in the revival of that social impulse which has gone far in a decade to change the face of England, and has brought a thrill of new hope to the poorest of the poor, may well thank God and take courage. The richest result of these years is not in pensions to the aged, legal protection to the children, insurance against invalidity and unemployment, relief under the Trade Board to sweated workers, and many another practical achievement of immense value. It is in the new social enthusiasm, the sense of interde-

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pendence and solidarity which will still carry us far. Faith in the possibility of Christian brotherhood, not as a short-lived experiment of the first Christian century, but as a social reality of the twentieth, has risen from the dead, and become the dominant belief in hundreds of thousands of sincere and earnest folk. It may not as yet have made any definite impression on the minds and imaginations of our rulers; but it has captured, to a remarkable degree, the sympathies of those who, in positions of less influence, lead the democratic forces in the most powerful nations of Europe and America. Its growth has been swift. Even now it is probably the greatest factor on the side of international peace.

It is fashionable in all parties now to patronise social politics. But in those days this attitude was so new, and the soul behind it was so imperfectly developed, that the watchwords did not trip off the tongue with

the glibness that we all now admire. No political machine had been invented to register the tremors of the coming social upheaval. But those of us who were in practical touch with middle-class and working-class opinion, even in London, knew that a new political science was being taught and believed; and that ideals were being invoked more fundamental and explosive than any that had been effected in the sphere of politics for many generations. Even while men debated the superficial issues they were making appeal to a code of political ethics with which politicians had not often concerned themselves. Quietly but effectually Labour passed out of its inchoate stage into an organic whole, conscious of its strength, and resolute to be heard and heeded. With its resurgence, a thousand social aspirations ceased to be thought of as wild and visionary, and became possibilities of practical politics. But it was not Labour only in the technical

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sense that was impregnated with this new idealism. Nowhere was it more welcome than in the Free Churches, which have an inheritance of three hundred years of social and political struggle, and to whom the watchwords of liberty, equality and fraternity are as old as the New Testament. It was in such a spirit, and at such a time, that we founded the Whitefield's Central Mission in the frank and avowed belief that it lies within the destiny of a democratic Christianity to create a new earth wherein dwelleth justice.



THE PILGRIM CHURCH.

Angel of Freedom: Whither goest thou?

The Pilgrim Church: I go to rid yonder pilgrim of his burden.

Angel of Freedom: Suffer me first to deliver thee from thine own burden.

CHAPTER II

THE CHURCH MILITANT

It is difficult to be sure in London whether the Church of Christ is fighting for her own life or for the life of the community. In regard to many Churches there is no question. They are fighting desperately for bare existence. They are too much exercised with the problem of keeping their head above water to be able to do anything substantial to help their struggling semi-submerged neighbours. The first original cartoon we published in our Whitefield's paper was admirably drawn by Miss E. S. Thomson. It was called "The Pilgrim Church." In the distance was the figure of Humanity, weighed down by its burden. In the fore-

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ground was the beautiful figure of the Church, eager to save Humanity, but itself so loaded with unnecessary burdens that the task was beyond its powers. The Angel of Freedom with a drawn sword stood ready to loose the bonds of the Church and set it free to fulfil its mission. This is how the need of the hour presents itself to my mind. The burdens beneath which the Church is bowed down, in our cartoon, are Dogmatism, Formalism, Conventionalism, and State Establishment. There are many admirable qualities in the Anglican Church that I admire and envy. But I have seen nothing to make me desire State Establishment. The effect of having your service prescribed by Parliament is that you are powerless to adapt them to the needs and tastes of the multitude. You cannot surrender to the inspiration of the hour. We, Free Churchmen, doubtless run great risks; but the hazards of the spontaneous in worship are small in

comparison with the drawbacks inseparable from the statutory. In a frank conference with East End clergy on one occasion I found them unanimous in deplored the fact that they had so little freedom to adapt their services to the people whom they were concerned to influence. No such disability troubles Free Churchmen; but it must be added that we make far too little use of our freedom. By the rigidity of our orders of service we have contrived practically to eliminate the spontaneous. This is sometimes a result of the tyranny of the organist and choir, who are annoyed if they are called upon to perform the unexpected. I sometimes wonder if the great god Tape is not a more formidable enemy to religious progress even than the god Mammon. When you bestow a few moments of serious thought on the prodigious number of regulation services held in churches and chapels Sunday by Sunday, and then open your New

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Testament and read the exquisite story of the Great Master talking so simply and suggestively to the peasant people, in the open air, about the works of nature and the processes of their daily life, you realise how far we have gone in this fatal conventionalising of worship. I have been wont to insist that the only difference between a groove and a grave is a matter of depth; and we have worn our grooves deep enough, in all conscience.

It has been borne in upon me that what we call public worship is either the most tremendous of realities or the most ghastly of insipidities. One or the other. The possibilities are so amazing; the average results are so pitiful. A clever article by a well-known journalist in America told how those who wanted to see "life" in New York, and who were sated with the unrealities of society and the theatre, found their way down to a little mission-room in

the Bowery, associated with the name of Jerry Macauley. There real things happened. That mission-room was the daily scene of a sensationalism that could be paralleled nowhere else in New York. You could see light come back to those walking in darkness. You could literally watch the birth of souls. You felt as if you were at the source of the mystic River of Life. Little wonder that reporters went there for "copy," and that *blasé* "first-nighters" found their real drama incomparably arresting. Yet nothing happened in that east-side mission-room in New York that may not happen in every congregation. The human material is not more promising there; nor are the forces of regeneration more accessible. Only, to our little faith, it seems too much to expect that the dark regions of sin and scepticism shall be visited by "the light that never was on sea or land." We have some faith left in education; but

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almost none in what our fathers called conversion.

Science, busy transforming waste products into material of value, has no misgivings as to the necessity and possibility of conversion. The novelist and the dramatist could hardly expect to interest and convince us if they did not make conversion an article of their creed. I remember very well receiving a letter from Mr. Jerome K. Jerome asking me to be present at the first performance of "The Passing of the Third Floor Back." He was attempting a very daring novelty, and was somewhat apprehensive as to how the public would take it. Time has shown that he need not have been. I went to see the play; and my first impression was that the fact of conversion in which so many Christian people had ceased to believe was valuable material for the modern dramatist. The changes that took place in the characters in Mr. Jerome's play were no whit more extraordinary, and no whit less, than those which

take place daily in the Bowery mission-room. But the modern Church is so busy saving itself, and paying its way, that it has neither the energy, nor the vision, nor the daring to put its Gospel to the proof. It is still hopeful of the young; but it confesses its practical despair of the vulgar, selfish residents of the Bloomsbury lodging-house. "We're a rotten lot," exclaims the servant girl; and Mr. Jerome tells us what he thinks of them in the programme: "A Cad, a Cheat, a Slut, a Shrew, a Snob, a Bully, a Hussy, a Satyr, a Coward and a Rogue."

Such they were until the Passer By came their way, and his belief in them recreated their own faith in themselves and in one another. Unless the Churches accept this possibility, they may just as well close their doors.

It was my ambition from the first to make Whitefield's a Free Church, in the full sense of that word. Free we must be to adapt our services and methods of work to the people

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we wanted to win. Free we must be to deliver the message of Christianity as we understood it to all sorts and conditions of people, in terms of modern thought, and in application to the whole life of the community. Nobody can face this problem without coming up against prejudices and vested interests right at the start. One of the pet prejudices of Nonconformists is in favour of pew rents and allocated sittings. My own strong feeling is that sittings should be allocated for the morning service, when children come with their parents; but that in the evening all seats should be free. My first battle at Whitefield's was with one who subsequently became, and continued to the time of his death, a staunch and generous ally. He held by the proprietary principle of pew-holding. Your pew was as much your private property as the house you rented. We had a very spirited correspondence. He announced that he had given

orders for the removal of his cushions to the City Temple; and I congratulated him on the opportunity he would have of hearing a far better preacher than myself. At last I invited myself to lunch at his house, and he met me at the door with the question whether I had brought my pistols. "You see," he said, "I am accustomed to have my own way." "Yes," I suggested, "and it will therefore be a pleasant novelty for you to try mine." We were the best of friends from that time on.

If it is often a struggle to get people into churches, it is sometimes a greater one to get them out. When Christ marched to the Temple followed by the Jerusalem crowds, His first business was to turn out the money-changers. He brought the outsiders in and He turned the insiders out. It must often be necessary to get rid of some insiders before the outsiders will feel that they are really wanted. Of course there were several

supporters of the old order of things who were quite irreconcilable, and who shook the dust from their feet against us. Others endured for a while, but when the fierce light began to beat upon us they "withered away." In the noble army of critics, at all times, are included those who, among the few, complain that appeal is not made to the multitude, and among the multitude complain that enough attention is not bestowed upon the few. The adherents of the theory of a "little garden walled around" have something to say for themselves on the modern principle of "intensive culture." There is always the danger that work for the masses may become too extensive and too little intensive. But from the first we were governed by our ideal, and we had no option. London is a vast problem, and we had to quarrel with some saints to get freedom to deal with the sinners. A good many cushions would have been removed if we had not

removed them first of all. Everybody knows the proprietorial habit of cushioning a few seats in a pew, and then inviting the stranger within your gates to sit on the bare wood beyond the cushion. To sweep away these invidious distinctions, and upholster your church on a sound principle of equality is the first method of a democratic community intent on aggressive operations.

It was my great good fortune at the beginning to secure as a colleague a man whose gift of organisation almost amounted to genius. Our problem was to revolutionise our buildings in a very limited period, and to adapt them to the work we were resolved to do. Beneath the church was a fine hall capable of seating eight hundred people, and named after Augustus Toplady, the author of the famous hymn "Rock of Ages," whose coffin was discovered when the excavations for the hall were made. This hall, when we came into possession, was large

and dreary. Never shall I forget how my colleague had some wooden partitions erected in one corner, and in the rough room thus provided he installed a bed, and became general caretaker and master of works. By means of enamelled partitions we broke up the monotony of the hall, while carpets and tables gave the final touches. It was our idea to make provision for all those shop assistants whose firms will not allow them on the premises on Sundays; as well as those to whom Sunday is the most lonely and cheerless day in the week. If we had ever been in any doubt as to whether such a place was needed the first Sunday would have dispelled all misgivings. From the beginning our accommodation has been taxed to the utmost; and we were able incidentally to gather invaluable information as to how our neighbours live in London, and what it is they need. I remember very well that on an early Sunday I launched out against the

prevalence of Sunday trading, and urged my hearers not to create unnecessary Sunday work by attending the Sunday market. At the end a kindly, shabby man came to me and said, "I liked what you said from that platform very well; but if you and your wife and children had only one room to live in and sleep in, would you buy your meat on Saturday night, and hang it up in that room?" I said nothing. It occurred to me that there were some things I had yet to learn as to how my neighbours have to live. It was a great satisfaction to be able to add some human and festive touches to the lives of some of the lonely ones of London. We would arrange for special birthday parties, with a cake and other luxuries, for which our charges were decidedly "popular"; we curtained off a recess for such private festivities, and either my colleague or I would drop in to wish the usual "happy returns." Our one aim was to make the

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Church stand for all that was most human and most social—a real Mother Church, whose roof was hospitable enough to cover all comers.

To pay off the accumulated debt with which our place was burdened, build the new institutional premises—the gift of the best helper our type of work has ever had in London, Mr. W. H. Brown—and adapt existing premises to modern enterprises cannot have cost less than thirty thousand pounds. It all came to us in a few months, and we were able to launch out again in directions that will be indicated later. The change was so miraculous that it is little wonder that the crowds grew denser and denser. Our difficulties arose from the embarrassment of numbers. Morning, noon and night the people came. We had intended to go to them; we had not anticipated the freedom with which they came to us. The men's meeting struck a new note in the

neighbourhood. Earnest men who had got out of the way of looking to the Churches for social leadership, and who thought themselves not good Christians enough to work through the Churches, volunteered service. We were almost overwhelmed by would-be officers. That was when our new liner, fresh of paint, and with no signs upon her of stress of weather was moving serenely in calm water, to the accompaniment of the cheers of the multitude. We were glad of their sympathy then; but we were prouder still of those whose stomachs did not fail them when the storms arose, and the good ship was beating and buffeting her way through lively seas. Needless to say some who had signed on for the voyage found the motion too much for them. They had not bargained for anything more adventurous than calm sailing near sheltered shores. But they were few. For the most part I am bound to say, the stronger the gale the more gay and loyal were crew

and passengers. We have never had any opportunity at Whitefield's to practise "fugitive and cloistered virtues." We are a homely, weather-beaten people; and to that extent are certainly in the apostolical succession.

It is sometimes suggested that if there were no wars there would be no field for the culture of the heroic qualities, and that consequently we must continue to kill one another in the interests of moral development. It is a curious argument; but if any one is sceptical as to whether the enterprises of peace do evoke martial virtues, let him identify himself with some aggressive Christian mission such as ours. If we are men of peace, it is "not peace that grows by Lethe, scentless flower." It is the peace of the Church militant, where the business is too urgent and too radical to be transacted with the cheap superficiality of the sword. What weapons are exactly legitimate in this war-

fare is still matter for fiery controversy. The tendency has been to give "the world" the unchallenged monopoly of many of the most effective weapons. General Booth complained that the devil had all the good tunes. The criticism was too sweeping, but it had substance in it. The devil has also had too many of the good games. This is because the Mother Church has not been human enough. She has been too spiritual to be social; or she has thought herself so. Billiards is a good game. Rich men, whose evangelical views are beyond reproach, have it in their homes. But if poor men wanted to play billiards, it used to be a case of the public-house or nowhere. In the end it was the public-house. Then the Churches said that the game was "worldly," and "of the evil one." But still they did not realise that they might rescue one of the best of games from the temptations incidental to saloon billiards. I remember that when we opened

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our Institute, Sir Francis Carruthers Gould advised me to keep a friendly eye on the billiard-room. Nothing has happened since to make me think that billiards are unwholesome or demoralising. Nobody would think the game inconsistent with a Christian life who was not interested in an exotic type of piety. But I protest vehemently that an institutional church is not, as it has been represented, merely a church plus a billiard-table; nor is its ideal fulfilled when young men are taught "to go in off the red." All interests are means to the supreme end; the saving of the individual to a clean, upright, disinterested character, and the community to a life that is wholesome, and educative of what is best in its members. Of course it is better for young people to read books than to play games; and of course the love of amusement may seduce them from more profitable employment. But if we had spent a long day on our feet behind a counter, or

in a factory, we should probably think that when the dreary day is over billiards are better than Browning, and a game of chess than the study of Adam Smith. So the Mother Church will not expect too much of her children.

At the same time no wise community can neglect the intellectual life. The effort to persuade one's fellows to read good books, and some big books, however often disappointed, must never cease. Lectures, too, can nowadays be made supremely interesting; and when I say that we have had of late as many as seventeen hundred members of our society which provides weekly lectures it will be apparent that the day of good lectures is not yet over. And Music! Perhaps the finest instrument of all to appeal to our diverse classes and races. Whitefield's on Saturday evenings presented a wonderful spectacle when the famous military bands discoursed popular music. The only sight

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I have seen that surpassed it in thrilling interest was when Madame Clara Butt sang to nearly two thousand men on a Sunday afternoon, and their faces betrayed their emotion as the great strains of “O rest in the Lord” rang through the building.

From the first we have claimed our inheritance in the world’s greatest music. Our orchestra on Sunday evenings played it for half-an-hour before the service began. We have tried to persuade all who have musical gifts to exercise and improve them. Above all we have aimed at congregational singing. One of the real difficulties lies in the notorious fact that there are fine evangelical hymns, and there are fine social hymns; but the hymns that give expression at once to the Christian faith and its outcome in the Christian social order are few or none. The only Christian order recognised in most hymns is in Heaven. Hence the luscious and often sensuous imagery of golden streets

and harps in another state of existence. But our best Christians are not thinking of Heaven, and certainly not yearning for it. They have visions of the City of God descending out of Heaven. Their hearts are set on a higher Will done "on earth as it is in Heaven." Even those hymns which are the noblest vehicle of individual worship, and which can never be out of date, leave something to be desired. The new hymn will come in time. It will be born of the new aspirations and emotions which are the work of the spirit. How real is the desire for this new type of hymn was brought home to me by one experience. We all remember the Torrey-Alexander mission, so loudly advertised, and so barren of results. We remember the attempt to make London sing the "Glory Song" with its egoistic refrain, "That will be glory for me." The tune was melodious enough, and as nobody else would do it I tried my hand at a new Glory Song

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which would express the hopes we cherish of a higher righteousness, and ascribe the glory where it alone belongs. This hymn was printed and published, and I am afraid to say how large is the number of copies sold, but I know it has passed into one hymn-book after another both here and in America, its popularity being due to the relief from a self-centred religion with its hopes fixed on a Paradise hereafter, and the satisfaction of expressing in music the ideal of a redeemed humanity and the glory of its Redeemer. In addition we have claimed so many of the finest secular (so-called) tunes that the visitor to Whitefield's may at any time hear "The Men of Harlech," "The Marseillaise," "Drink to me only," "Land of my Fathers," and other well-known strains wedded to words of Christian faith and social hope. With us, at any rate, the devil is allowed no monopoly of all the good tunes.

In discussing the weapons which the

Church may use to get its message home to all sorts and conditions of people, one comes naturally to the question of the theatre. This is no new problem. John Calvin had trouble with it in Geneva, and consented to at least one experiment. The miracle and morality plays are well known. But if the Church is to reconsider her attitude she will have to adopt a less restricted and timid policy than the revival of archaic forms. The real question is whether the Church ought to approve of dramatic art used to present its message to the man in the street. The natural answer is that if we can make use of billiards and football and tennis and other amusements which can hardly be said to set forth any positive Christian message, surely the drama is a far more justifiable agency since it can be adapted to set forth the highest truths. There are, of course, other considerations which will occur to all minds. Our experiments at Whitefield's can be very shortly

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described. For many years now at the Christmas season we have held what is known as a Dickens Festival. This is a dramatic representation, including tableaux and acted scenes, of some story of Dickens, adapted and presented by our young people themselves. These festivals not only draw great crowds and extend over three evenings, but they keep the fame of Dickens green among us, and enforce his simple gospel of goodwill.

A much more ambitious effort, and one which attracted some attention at the time, was a dramatised version of Dr. Charles Sheldon's famous story, *What would Jesus do?* This story was thrown into dramatic form by my friend, Mr. Francis Neilson, M.P., and it would be difficult to exaggerate the impression produced on the large audiences who were present at the "dramatic recital" of this version. Needless to say all the arrangements were made by ourselves, and those who took part regarded the matter

seriously, and entered into the idea that it was a dramatic sermon designed to make many people think who would not easily be found within church walls. The other experiment that I recall was the so-called Pageant at the Orient Exhibition, where the full resources of music and dramatic action were employed to set forth the missionary triumphs on the foreign field. For weeks this spectacle drew enormous multitudes together in the Agricultural Hall, and it has since had equal popularity in many great cities in America. The problem, therefore, of the use which the Churches may make of the dramatic gifts of their members to set forth their message and mission, has been definitely raised, and will doubtless demand further thought. Those who have read Miss Jane Addams' fascinating book, *Twenty-one Years at Hull House, Chicago*, will remember that at the Hull House Settlement there is a theatre, and that from time to time some

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budding dramatist at the settlement will write a play setting forth the labour conditions, or endeavouring to probe social and moral problems. I do not expect to see any Central Church fully equipped with a theatre during the next few years. But I confess to a desire to have one hall at least adapted to, and licensed for, the purpose, if only to encourage earnest and sincere men and women who are possessed of some Christian idealism to experiment in the dramatic presentation of Christian history, as well as to mirror the actual problems of life and faith as we see them.

A less debateable weapon which every Church militant ought to employ is a confidential civic or social committee. This should consist of responsible and shrewd persons, and its business should be to collect detailed evidence of the condition of the neighbourhood, and what social and moral plagues are rife. I have been pleading of

recent years, up and down the country, for "scientific saints." We do not want the people who as they become more scientific become less saintly, nor those who as they become more saintly become less scientific.

The sloppy sentimentalism which sometimes passes for saintliness, is of less and less use in the world. The dear man canonised by Goldsmith in his famous description—

"Careless their merits or their wants to scan,
His pity gave ere charity began"—

is the source of half our trouble. It is this very carelessness which demoralises the weak, and which satisfies us with superficial relief, instead of probing root-causes and applying permanent remedies. The old poor-law system would never have lasted as long as it has done if people had made up their minds to take pains in dealing with poverty. The ignorance of the average citizen as to what the law is constantly amazes one; yet one has only to sit on a

civic committee for a short time to discover how many points as to ordinary law are outside one's own knowledge. Many Churches still appear to believe that the great war for clean streets and pure homes is no affair of theirs. Yet as soon as you begin to look into the facts, you become aware how powerful are the forces fighting on the other side, how close is their alliance, and what convenient gaps exist in the law so that they may escape serious disaster.

Much also depends on the character of your local Council, and the attitude of your magistrates. It is annoying how news will filter through to the purveyors of filthy literature or postcards that they are to be raided, so that when the police arrive their prey has vanished into the unknown. It is equally amazing what publications and pictures *some* magistrates can be persuaded to pronounce tolerable. Nothing is more necessary in some districts than to watch the postcard

shops. The stuff kept behind the counter is incredibly foul and filthy. Two boys were sent down from one of the great public schools recently for having horrible postcards in their possession. Their parents and their vicar were aghast. The evil pictures were traced to the Euston Road. The boys had entered the shop on a perfectly reasonable errand, and were then seduced into buying these prints, which they had not the manhood to destroy. In the early days at Whitefield's we accumulated a stock of these postcards, and then brought round a number of our local councillors to see them. The latter were incredulous till the stuff was produced. It is a nauseous business. It stains the imagination. The vile images haunt you. Not in the coarsest days of paganism can some of these abominable portraiture have been surpassed. They are more obscene, and far more corrupting than Rabelais in his most evil mood. I believe they have an

enormous secret circulation. At any rate, men—and women too, alas!—will run big financial risks to keep a shop open where they can be surreptitiously sold. It is a perilous but a profitable trade. Let us remember that neighbourhoods can be cleansed of this garbage, which breeds moral malaria; and it is as much a duty to do it as it is to track down and extirpate the sources of physical disease.

The gambling habit is far less easy to deal with as the law stands, though Lord Davey's Act has done wonders. But so long as the press is an almost universal medium for the circulation of betting odds, and so long as nearly every newsvendor exposes large advertisements of betting tips, such desultory efforts as can be made to deal with these harpies are almost foredoomed to failure. The profits made out of a disingenuous public are so gigantic, that police-court fines are a farce; and men and women naturally

ask why what is right in fashionable people on a race-course, is wrong in cabbies or cabinet-makers in the Tottenham Court Road. Some day we shall have educated a conscience against this widespread curse, and shall arm ourselves with full powers as a nation to reduce it to a minimum. Meanwhile every branch of the Church militant will be well advised to learn the facts, and to convince all whom they can influence of the necessity of drastic legislation in the interests of a healthy commonwealth.

CHAPTER III

THE SUBTER-MAN

WE hear much in these days of the super-man. He has been so freely discussed that there is some hope we shall know him when we see him. But meanwhile we are as tired of waiting as the Jews of the Jerusalem wailing-place are weary of the non-appearance of the Messiah. If the super-man has not yet materialised, the subter-man is with us as a practical problem. We sometimes speak of him as submerged; yet it is not so far down to his habitual haunts that we cannot come at him. I suggest that in the interval of waiting for the super-man, ordinary people like ourselves might devote some time, thought and sympathy to the case of the subter-man.

London's disease is an eternal insomnia. Walk or drive about her streets at what hour you will, and you see restless human beings hurrying or drifting along. In the dead hours of the night this spectacle is, of course, most of all significant and impressive. I shall never forget the first night I spent in the streets. No artificial drama could ever be so fascinating and sensational as this one with the lamps of London for footlights, and the dark mysterious houses for background. From eleven o'clock till five, accompanied by a commissioner of police in plain clothes, I tramped the streets, and tried to form some conception of my new parish during the hours when certain parishioners are most alive. Our six hours were dedicated to the streets, but we paid one visit to the cells at the police station. Most of the miserable creatures whom we saw there, like wild beasts behind their cages, were women—or, should I say, they once were women? Certain I am

that, at the hyena houses at the Zoo, you cannot hear sounds more inhuman than the horrible laughter of drunken women in the cells at midnight. One such I remember especially to whom the pencil of Hogarth could not do justice. For days afterwards I was haunted by her cries, which rang terribly through the building. Her face was at the bars of the door—the face of a savage fierce with drink and lust; and her yells were those of delirium. For the time being she was obviously insane. I remember what my guide said to me with a short laugh—"God save her husband." From that, I suppose she had one. It was only one of many instances that have made me sympathetic with the claim that any who are linked to chronic inebriates of this kind should be granted the relief of divorce. There were many others in the cells that night, most of whom lay huddled in drunken stupor; but among them was one weeping pitifully. With her it was

a first experience, and the shame and agony of it had overwhelmed her.

We passed out on to the Tottenham Court Road. It was after midnight, but the procession of human beings had not ceased. Inside the police station were the few criminals whom the law had arrested. Outside were many who were more guilty than they. We crossed the road and stood in the shadow of a house watching what went on in front of Whitefield's Church. On the pavement stood one of the travelling coffee-stalls which exist ostensibly to supply the needs of men going to their work or returning from it during the midnight hours. The real character of the traffic was patent to any onlooker of ordinary discernment. The stall was solely used by the vicious classes, professional prostitutes and their bullies. They could not ply their trade through long hours on the street but for these coffee-stalls. I had often wondered why Mr. John Burns

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denounced these stalls. What he does not know about London is not worth knowing; and I saw now that he was right. If our great thoroughfare was to be made clean and respectable, these stalls were the key to the situation. I turned and asked my companion what right this particular stall-holder had to a pitch exactly in front of my church. "Oh!" laughed my companion, "all the good people are asleep!" When I came to think of it the explanation was simple enough. It is, of course, the habit of decent, respectable folk to sleep at nights, and not to trouble their heads as to what happens after they have retired from the scene. The man or the woman who makes a living out of vice may say of them, "They leave the world to darkness and to me." The commissioner was determined that I should realise that no respectable people could venture to use these coffee-stalls without being molested. In the crowd round this one the faces were

sufficiently ill-favoured. Moreover, the place was carefully picketed. We were soon detected, and a man carelessly strolled once in our direction. He evidently recognised my companion, and the word of warning went forth. I may say that it was at one of these stalls that a young soldier whom I knew quite well, bearing a well-known name, who had recently returned from South Africa, was murdered a few months before; and the crime was not brought home to any one. Before our tour of inspection was complete my mind was made up; and I may here record that on the following day we opened fire on the local council. They acted promptly and vigorously; and in a few weeks every coffee-stall disappeared off the Tottenham Court Road, which is to-day, I believe, one of the cleanest thoroughfares in London at night. Not long ago a policeman came up to me. He said he had never spoken to me before, but he wanted to thank me for

what Whitefield's had done in halving his work. The moral, however, remains expressed in the words of my friend the commissioner: these things happen because "the good people are asleep."

Let me return to the story of that first night in the streets. If I may say so, we traced the course of the stream of vice that flowed through west-central London. It flowed down towards the great railway stations as well as towards theatre-land. It is surprising what numbers of people arrive in London by night; and also how many fail to leave. Excursionists who miss the late train; or stranded visitors who have lost their tickets. Round the gates of London, which in our time are Euston, St. Pancras, King's Cross, etc., there are to be found at all hours the unwary and the unfortunate. At night they are helpless and sometimes frightened. When approached with the offer of a night's lodgings, the invitation is likely to be accepted

with gratitude; and many a young girl has slept that night to wish that she might wake no more. Many a young man has found himself compromised and plundered, even if he has escaped from worse perils. One of the extraordinary things to me is how long country parents will sometimes wait without news of their children before setting on foot any serious inquiry. It is no unusual thing for us to be asked to trace people; but I remember my own surprise when a father asked me if I could find his son, from whom he had not heard for six months. The father did not live very far from London; but if he had lived in Northumberland and had been a poor man one would have thought he would have pawned his furniture to get a ticket to London that he might hunt for his boy. We went to the last address the father knew of, and at once, from the character of the house, guessed what tragedy had happened. We traced him to another address;

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but it was evident he had become ashamed and had tried to cover his own tracks. We never discovered him. He is, of course, typical of hundreds. Another resolution formed during our midnight excursion was to make it known throughout the country that we would meet new-comers to London at any hour of the day or night. In our new buildings we provided certain bedrooms so that we could put chance visitors up for a night or two till we could find them decent rooms. It is the first step that costs, as the French say; and you can often prevent the catastrophe that no power on earth can cure. This particular work of ours got known at the railway stations. One night a young German girl arrived at Waterloo. She could not speak a word of English. She knew nobody; she had no address. The kindly porters were in despair when a cabby drove up, and said he knew the place where they did all "the odd jobs" in London. He

picked her up and drove her to Whitefield's. Our sisters took her in; and next morning she was taken by them to the German Consul, and finally lodged among her own people. She was just an example of the casual immigrants to our City who need to be cared for before trouble comes.

The commissioner and I were startled once that night. We heard an English voice; and it is a curious thing how we both remarked on it. I am sure that, apart from our own voices, it was the only English one we heard. I am speaking now of the Tottenham Court Road. It was not England but Europe that we saw and heard. Vice is ever cosmopolitan. Every country on the Continent makes contributions to the hideous traffic in human flesh and human honour. I was almost ashamed at my own sense of satisfaction that the English element was so small. For after all, these other people are equally human beings and of the same

infinite value in the sight of One with Whom is neither Jew nor Gentile. But it was the dominance of the "foreigner" that led me to ask my guide whether he could show me an anarchist club. We left the Tottenham Court Road and moved west, and in a very sombre street, ill-lighted and suggestive of any degree of secret mischief, he indicated a house that had at least one lighted room in it. We watched for awhile, and saw one man emerge, but whether he was an anarchist or not I know not. My friend agreed that the average anarchist is a very harmless fellow, with no desire whatever to resort to violence, but with a general sense of grievance against Society. At the time of the attempted assassination of the King and Queen of Spain there was an anarchist club in the Hampstead Road, near my house; and it was freely said that there had been active communication with the criminals who did that deed of horror. I only know that after

a very vehement speech against anarchy on a Sunday afternoon, I had a message professing to come from this club, and assuring me that I was black-listed. My own conviction was that the message was far more likely to have come from a public-house than from an anarchist club. One does sometimes wonder whether, if society continues to burden its members with the cost of enormous and ever-increasing armaments, and if it should add to that the compulsory military service for which so many eminent people are enthusiastic, the next great political movement may not be anarchical, and designed to break down the tyranny of society. As one whose sympathies are wholly on the other side, I do nevertheless think that, if modern tendencies continue, the hour of such revolt will come.

About five o'clock the grey light of the dawn crept over London. The crowd of street-walkers began to look curiously pallid

and haggard. Another night in a brief and hateful existence had gone by. Their enemy—the Day—was upon them; and they slunk back to their various hiding-places. The stream thinned out. In its place the river of legitimate labour began to flow. The stronger and more virile tread of the day labourer, on his way to his work, began to be heard. Here and there a public-house opens its doors to tempt the workman to waste his money on an early glass; and some of the evil night-crew drift in at the doors to play the temptress. But I remember as I walked home and met the workmen tramping along, I thanked God for their wholesome faces, and that for the most part they are uncontaminated by the pestilence that wasteth, and unwounded by the arrow that flieth, by night.

THE WHITEFIELD'S MEN'S MEETING.



CHAPTER IV

'MEN, MY BROTHERS'

I AM constantly hearing echoes of a correspondence in which I hazarded the opinion that men are more religious than women. It is just one of those general statements that is incapable of either proof or disproof. But this much is certain, that the assumption that men are indifferent to religious appeal is wholly untrue. They are not so easily satisfied with the forms of religion as women are; they are not so readily comforted or inspired by them. But that is no more than to say that to them religion must present itself not as an abstract speculation but as "a business proposition." What wearies them of the Churches is that they so seldom seem to get anywhere. They believe at heart in the

Christ who came into this world to get things done; and who did verily turn things inside out by the magic of His presence. When you begin to come to close quarters with workmen, so as to share their ideas, you find that they care far less to know that religion is *reasonable* than to know that it is *real*. It may be as unreasonable as that a butterfly should come out of a chrysalis or a hyacinth out of a bulb. They have the very sound belief that if our religion is good for anything it ought to be good for everything. Among the many changes that have passed over the mind of Protestant and Puritan England, we have to chronicle the fact that the ingenious construction of theologies by the logical interconnection of certain abstract propositions has ceased to interest our people. But Christianity at work, achieving its mighty ends in the social, moral and spiritual transformation of humanity, is still supremely interesting.

When we began our meetings for men on Sunday afternoons, we were influenced by several considerations. In the first place it must be remembered that Sunday afternoon is the only time in the week when the vast majority of men are free. Thus all sorts and conditions are available at that time and at no other. At three o'clock the public-houses close down for awhile; and actually the first two men to join our men's meeting came from behind the bar. Since then they have emigrated. They wanted to get into some other employment. It is worth while noting, however, that we received recruits from all quarters; and I verily believe that ours is the most cosmopolitan crowd you would find anywhere in London. Sunday afternoon is supposed to be a somnolent time, which accounts for the story which has been repeatedly told from our platform. A man came up and shook hands with me at the close of one of our early meetings.

"I've got a crow to pluck with you," he said.

"Well," I said, "what have I been doing now?"

"You've robbed me of my Sunday afternoon nap!"

"And how do you like the change?"

"Well, I've found out that *it's far more interesting to be awake than asleep.*"

That confession might form the text of an excellent discourse, for it has infinite applications. The great thing is to wake men up, and interest them in the real issues that are being decided everywhere in our own day. We resolved from the first that this should be our aim. It is far more interesting to be awake than asleep. I wanted to convince men that Christianity must either be capable of application to life and all its problems, or else we must find some other religion that is more authoritative and comprehensive. So our meeting was to be a school of Christian

citizenship. Its success has been so great, and its influence so far-reaching, that it has naturally been the object of a good deal of criticism. If nobody had come to it, nobody would have cared one way or the other. But it grew gradually from fifty members, until it numbered twelve hundred members, and every seat in the building was occupied. The crowd, however, was not the most impressive thing about the meeting. The spirit of it was unique and undefinable. Strangers repeatedly come to tell me they have never experienced anything quite like it. The singing is contagious. The organisation of a male voice choir gave us at the beginning an incomparable instrument for firing and inspiring the audience. But the real power came in the sense of a brotherhood that was both spiritual and social; that was equally alive on the side of faith in God, and love to mankind. From the first it was clear that the men did not surrender to any evangelical

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appeal of which they did not see the social application; nor did they care for political or social addresses if the religious motives and principles were not conspicuous. In the course of ten years we have had some five hundred addresses delivered by some hundreds of men of all types, yet the speakers who did not understand the idea of the meeting and the character of the address, could be counted on the fingers of one hand. Of course, at times things are said that one regrets; and equally, of course, if anything foolish or extreme is said at any men's meeting, it furnishes "copy" for the reporter, whose duty it is to provide the public with sensation. On the other hand, I am bound to express my thanks for the constant publicity given to this meeting by the press generally. That it has been worth their while to do so, is doubtless due to the fact that we have been so frequently successful in persuading men to speak to us who are

recognised as being possessed of expert knowledge on their subject. In one of the last public addresses delivered by him, Mr. W. T. Stead described Whitefield’s as the new Exeter Hall where every cause of human freedom could be pleaded; and our huge audiences have never appeared to greater advantage than when responding to the simple appeal of humanity.

It is, however, just here that the vexed problem of religion and politics arises. Mr. Bernard Shaw once complained to me that though the two subjects in which people are most of all interested are religion and politics; the stage is disabled from treating them, and therefore has to rely upon subjects of secondary interest to hold the public support. He is quite right as to the supreme place which these two subjects occupy in the general mind. Shallow critics are found to say that the Church should interest itself in religion and not in politics. The distinction

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is, of course, quite impossible. You may as well try to divorce religion from morals as from politics. Unless the well-being of the commonwealth is a matter of no concern to the Churches, they are bound to follow the trend of political movements with a most watchful eye; and from time to time intervene clearly and decisively. Let any one consider the great outstanding problems of our time, international arbitration, the reduction of armaments, disestablishment, education, temperance and licensing reform, housing, poor law reform, divorce; and those two questions which are greater than any other: the congested city and the deserted village. Who will say that the Church ought to be prepared to say nothing at all about these matters? Who will say that religion can even continue to exist among us if she do not bring her inspiration to bear upon such problems as these? I can understand the attitude of a consistent Plymouth

Brother, who says that Churches are false to their principles if they intervene to destroy the slave system, or to establish democratic government, or any other great end which has been sacrificially ensued by such Churches as my own. But what I cannot understand is the attitude of those who boast of the achievements of religion in the sphere of politics in bygone days, but who would have us believe now that there is something sinister in this association. They are as hopeless as the other good people who like to hear their minister expatiate on the evils of the Roman Empire, or the French Revolution, or even on the sins against freedom of modern Russia and Turkey, but who will not permit him to say a single word against their own social and national sins, because that would be talking politics. No Church that laid down such conditions for its ministry would deserve to have men of free and independent spirit in its ranks.

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I have not been able to derive as much comfort as most of my brethren from a distinction between politics and party politics. Every political question I have ever been interested in has been a non-party question in the sense used by these good friends, and has been fiercely contested by rival schools of thought. Education is not a party question, nor temperance, nor insurance, nor democracy, nor religious liberty, nor international peace; and yet we have lived to see each of these questions divide the nation into parties with little prospect of compromise between them. Perhaps in an ideal state, with Mr. Hilaire Belloc as President, we should have everything settled on lines of compromise without the manifestation of any of the party spirit which offends his soul. But we do not live in the ideal yet; and we cannot entirely postpone all activity until we do. As an old footballer, I have a prejudice in favour of taking sides, and playing for

your own side loyally, always, of course, assuming that it is the side to which you belong by conviction, and that you not only play a scrupulously fair game against your opponents, but appreciate and applaud their good form also. After all, we are out for goals. It ought not to trouble us that thousands who are as good Christians as we are, are keeping goal against us. There were thousands of good Christians who supported slavery once out of the Bible. They were wrong, and their descendants know that they were wrong. But if we were to desert all the great causes that are opposed by Christian people, nothing worth doing ever would be done in this queer world. The Free Churchman’s “side” is defined for him by history and tradition indifferently well. We Congregationalists have behind us the tradition of Milton and Cromwell in favour of the rights of the people as against the privileges of any caste or class. That is our goal. We

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inherit a splendid tradition of sacrificial labours for religious equality, social reform, educational freedom. This, again, defines our goal. We are not in any real difficulty as to our social and political action, though, I admit, economic theories are another story and demand much more careful and anxious consideration.

From the first we came to the conclusion that it was the more honest course to be quite frank with the public on this matter. We never pretended that we were non-political, as if political interests were something to be ashamed of. It was impossible to take that tone and at the same time exalt, as we meant to do, the dignity and nobility of politics. Our ambition was to make Christian citizens, and to inspire and organise a body of social reformers who should know the facts as to how men and women live, and should seek a remedy for the evils from which society suffers. I confess to being

somewhat tired of the disclaimer which is so common among the Churches of all sorts that they have nothing to do with politics. It does not prevent their taking political action whenever they think their own interests are affected. The Christian policy, one would suppose, would be one of non-intervention when their own interests were concerned, and one of unselfish activity whenever the struggle involved the welfare of other people. If it were ever suggested, however, that such had been the policy of the Churches, the public would smile. Yet again and again I have heard Churchmen of various kinds argue that they never take political action unless their own interests are affected. They seem to think that that proviso makes everything right. But, of course, all these well-meant exceptions break down hopelessly in the stress of affairs; and always will. The Anglican Church, through its spiritual peers, intervenes on Education

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and Licensing, as well as on Disestablishment and Divorce, and a score of other political issues. The Ulster Covenanters break forth into passionate political harangues when the cause of Irish self-government becomes the question of the hour. The Roman Catholic priest will even give instructions to the voter from the altar. All this is recognised as belonging to the natural order of things; and few onlookers affect to be scandalised. But when we Free Churchmen claim equal freedom to discuss affairs of State, even though we are as scrupulous as it behoves us to be not to exert any personal influence over any single Church-member, but to emphasise a man's responsibility to God for the use of his vote, and leave it at that, our temerity draws down upon us the thunders and lightnings of the secular and the sectarian press alike, while the partisans of the afore-mentioned Churches unite to tell us, with impressive emphasis, what they

think about us. One may be forgiven some genuine enjoyment of the humour of the situation, and it is certain that it is not lost upon the man in the street. But, I agree, that because this practical intervention in politics is universal among the Churches, and most of all among those who are foremost in protesting their innocence, it does not prove that it is right. It is only when one honestly and seriously faces the issues of life, and tries to acquit oneself as a subject of the kingdom of God, that the close and inseparable relation of religion and politics comes home to one. One may think it a pity that Anglican bishops have so often voted in the wrong lobby; but it is better to vote in the wrong lobby than not to vote at all.

It was not difficult to decide that any body of men, trained to faith in Christ and citizenship, would have a say in matters political; but it was not so easy to decide by what body of principles we should be guided.

Among us, even as outside our borders, there were many competing schools of thought. Young fellows who had kindled to the teaching of modern Socialism, rejoiced in the foundation of a society which emphasised the moral obligations without which any form of Socialism must be impossible. But even then one had to recognise that we had in our ranks the abstract Socialist who had no use for any one who could not pronounce his shibboleths, and the practical Socialist, who did not believe in refusing to accept better conditions, even when they fell short of his ideal. Personally, I find it as impossible to resist the Socialist sympathies as to accept the Socialist postulates. But we were soon to discover that it matters little or nothing what theory of an ultimate society a man may have at the back of his mind. Our business is to examine each new question as it arises in the light of certain very simple principles. One is that life is of greater

value than property; another is that, outside the sphere of conscience, no individual has any rights against the State, and that private interests must always give way to the public interest; another is that the first consideration of the commonwealth is due to the last and least of its members. There is one motto which is more Christian than Mr. G. F. Watts' saying, “The utmost for the highest,” and that is “the utmost for the lowest.” Life's biggest and bravest duties are, according to the teaching of Jesus, owed to “the least of these My brethren.” While we are all applauding the sentiments that God helps those who help themselves, the one outstanding Christian teaching is that God helps those who cannot help themselves; and that when Christ thrust into the foreground of His programme the weak, the helpless, the morally, spiritually and economically insolvent, and told an astonished world that the last should be first, the least should be greatest, and the

lost should be found, He was “setting the pace” for all who aspire to follow Him. Paul’s great conception of solidarity has never yet been surpassed, “and those members of the body which we *think* to be less honourable, upon these we bestow more abundant honour.” When politics cease to be the science of strengthening the strong, and become rather the science of rescuing “the bottom dog,” and giving him a better chance of existence, politics begin to deserve the name Christian.

From the first our persistent championship of those who were fighting forlorn hopes, won the sympathy and support of those whose co-operation was best worth having. Especially did we value the practical help of many leaders in our London Trades Unionism. The ideal of Trades Unionism is to bring the power of the whole to the assistance of the weakest member. It was born in Primitive Methodism. One of its first defenders

was the eloquent Robert Hall, who protested against all critics that the Leicestershire stocking-weavers had the right to combine to prevent wages being depressed below the living point. In other words, he insisted that a Trades Unionism was Christian which aimed at succouring and saving the bottom dog. One of the earliest meetings on our premises at which I was present on the platform was a Trades Union meeting addressed by Mr. John Burns. Various Unions were represented, especially related to coach-building. I remember one branch was called the “body-makers,” and Mr. Burns told them that they must be soul-builders as well as body-makers. He delivered a magnificent exhortation to this meeting, courageous, and lofty in spirit; and I need hardly say that it was vehemently applauded. Shortly afterwards I was asked to allow the use of Whitefield’s for a meeting of the Shop Assistants Union, which I had no hesitation in doing.

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Of all classes in London, the shop assistants seem to me to need organisation the most. Of course, there are many large and excellently-conducted houses of business in London, where almost all is done that can humanly be devised to counteract the obvious disadvantages and dangers of the living-in system. Those who are thus favourably situated are prone to forget the great mass of their brethren whose lot is anything but enviable. Especially is this the case in small and struggling shops where, often from no fault but the poverty of the shop-keeper, the conditions of life are very miserable for the assistant or assistants. It is another case of a Trades Unionism that exists to bring the help of the strong to the succour of the weak; and I have had many opportunities since then of showing a public sympathy with this special Union. Later on I went down to Gravesend and spoke for the Labour candidate against the Liberal candidate, to

the no small scandal of my party friends at the time, but on the ground that the Labour candidate had been long selected, and that as the secretary of the Shop Assistants' Union he was greatly needed in the House of Commons.

We had further opportunity of making our sympathies known when the first strike of chauffeurs took place in the days when motor-buses were new. The strike appeared to me to be at once well-justified and ill-advised. The new Union had no funds behind them, and had no chance against a rich company. But their grievances were real. Their hours were intolerable; their rest-days nil; their wages inadequate. Knowing their own weakness, they came to us for a backing; and we were able not only to give them room for their meetings on our premises, but to conduct much of the negotiations that followed. Some improvements in their conditions were obtained, and they resumed work after a final

meeting at Whitefield's, which was as fine in its way as any religious service could be. Much water has flowed under London Bridge since then, yet still the same grievances exist, and the safety of the public in London is threatened by men whose nerve is exhausted by over-work and under-rest, and whose labour is perhaps the most exacting possible in the Metropolis.

This kind of practical sympathy with those who are struggling to win for themselves and their children better conditions of life and labour has permeated our whole Brotherhood, and makes itself felt even to the casual visitor. A well-known London artist sat one Sunday afternoon upon our platform, and was so much impressed that he came again. Then he offered to do us a great service. He offered to design for us a banner. This he did. The banner which he painted can be seen, in miniature, at the beginning of Chapter VI. It is the figure of a knight aspiring

to win the City of God, but not content to ascend thither himself unless he can carry a wounded knight upward with him to the goal. Thus he, too, helps those who cannot help themselves. It is not too much to say that the banner designed and painted by Mr. Hugh Rivière has spoken this message to many thousands of men.

Nobody can come into contact with Trades Unions and their officers without being influenced by the personality and character of many of their leaders. One ceases to wonder that our London statistics prove conclusively that it is men of this class who use the Free Libraries for works on science, biography, history and general literature. In many cases the skilled artisan of to-day is the best-read man in England. My memory goes back to a Sunday evening when a Trades Union officer, with a keen, refined face, came into my room at Whitefield’s after the evening service, and, after some apologies for

troubling me, said he had been impelled to come because of the difficulty he had in getting any real conception of God. He did not doubt God's existence, but he did not feel he had any intellectual comprehension of the Deity. It came out in conversation that he had read and studied Kant and Hegel, and most of our own philosophers and theologians. Finally he asked me whether I thought that, apart from the Bible, he would get most help from Spinoza and Robert Browning? And I cordially agreed. These men are very jealous for the character of their movement. To them, Trade Unionism has stood for more than the maintenance of their material interests. It has been a moral and an intellectual movement; and within its borders ideals have been born of the first importance to the world of Labour and its future. Trades Unionism, on its financial side, needs supplementing by those supreme motives which the modern Brotherhood movement supplies. That is why so

many of its best and wisest leaders are equally active in the latter propagandism. They know that, in the words of John Burns, it is necessary to be soul-builders as well as body-makers. Let me add that it is a thousand pities that the army of fiction-drunkards who flood the Free Libraries for no purpose but to indulge in a weekly debauch of novels have created a widespread prejudice against these libraries, with the result that the real would-be readers and students are deprived of their opportunity. For years we have been struggling to carry out a Central Library scheme for St. Pancras—an area that used to call itself the seventh city in the empire—and, as yet, in vain. I have lively recollections of a crowded meeting in the Town Hall, and a packed opposition, when the best support I received in advocating the Library was from the leader of the party in our municipal parliament with which I have least in common.

Failing a Free Library, we had two courses

open to us at Whitefield's. The first was to get together as good a library as we could in connection with our Institute. This we did, and many have joined us for the sake of the library alone. But of course we could not allow the books to be taken out—a fact which made the second part of our policy necessary. We resolved to do all in our power to encourage the purchase of really good books. Each member of our meeting may, if he chooses, pay a penny or more each week to be expended in the purchase of books. The success of this co-operative effort has been astonishing, and the quality of the books purchased has been at least as remarkable as the quantity. Encyclopædias, dictionaries, commentaries, atlases and other books of reference are equally popular with that magnificent library of Mr. Dent's, which makes the best literature in the world available to us all. In hundreds of homes to-day there are libraries of which nobody need be

ashamed which had no existence ten years ago.

This is one of many facts which have been responsible for the decline and fall of the dogmatist. The final things of faith can no longer be settled on the mere *ipse dixit* of a preacher or a priest. The average hearer was never more disinclined to a process of forcible feeding than he is now. The ecclesiastic who counts it a compliment that men and women should accept his word as law, who cultivates the air of infallibility and cannot brook contradiction, finds modern soil hard and intractable. But the minister who is content to be a fellow-seeker in the great and growing brotherhood of those who are pledged to the quest of the chief good will have no cause to regret that the day of artificial authority has given place to the day of personal influence. The most fascinating sensation is that produced by a multitude of minds working independently on the greatest

of all themes, and reaching together those certainties which mean power and peace. It seems to me that the man is a fool who would exchange his place in that fellowship for any assumed official sanctity or authority which may attach itself to an artificial clerical order. When men come to consult you to-day it is not with the idea that you can settle their doubts and difficulties by the fiat of a dictator, but that out of your own reading, thought and experience you may be able to throw some measure of light upon their problems, and when that is possible they are immeasurably grateful. But your chance to be of use is gone if you merely fall back upon ecclesiastical tradition. To the modern workman this is no more than a convenient evasion, and his respect for you is diminished. He is always ready to be met with a frank "I don't know," and thinks none the worse of the friend who makes no pretence to what Charles Lamb called superficial omniscience. Let

any one who doubts this spend an early hour on any Sunday morning in a well-conducted Adult School, where men meet for frank discussion of Bible teaching and its application. We have never had a large school at Whitefield’s, but its members have abundantly made up for any lack of numbers by the variety of points of view represented. We have been fortunate enough to have men of wide knowledge and human sympathies as leaders of the discussions; and while the members quickly weary of the merely negative, they are swift to interpret sympathetically any positive faith, however quaintly put. I have been present when the school has been raided by energetic missionaries of a bleak rationalism. The vigorous efforts of these friends to keep their own arid creed alive in the midst of so much eager and intelligent faith and genuine spiritual vitality were most instructive. But there was no need to feel apprehensive as to the result of their well-

intentioned endeavour to persuade men to believe nothing. The last gospel likely to prevail in England is this gospel of nescience. Science is another story; and I have constantly been struck by our men's almost blind belief in science, and their gratitude for the splendid services which science has rendered to humanity. In that part of London where Faraday toiled, and where he rejoiced over his own scientific and spiritual discoveries, this is as it should be.

I have long been of opinion that the most powerful factor in breaking down unbelief is not even the word of a prophet—were such a man to be found in our prosaic times—but the atmosphere of faith created by men who are spiritually alive and morally at one. In the presence of such an assembly even Saul will feel himself among the prophets, and will be conscious of the stirring of long dormant aspirations and emotions. It is impossible to explain the transformations of

character on any other theory. One day a young workman came in to see us, evidently labouring under deep emotion, and with a brown paper parcel under his arm. He said nothing, but he opened his parcel and handed out to us a framed piece of prose. There was nothing to indicate the author. The passage in question was, if I remember rightly, in praise of nature, and was evidently the product of a fine mind. He said simply, “My father wrote that.” “Indeed,” I said, “who was your father? These are noble words.” Then it came out that his father had been prominently identified with the negative rationalism of a generation back. “He was the best man I ever knew,” said our visitor, “and he died as he lived; he did not seem to want any faith.” I said nothing. Indeed, there was nothing to say. After waiting a minute he went on, with a very broken voice, “I brought that for you to see, because I know now that my father was

wrong.” I despair of conveying to any one the genuine emotion under which the speaker laboured as he said this. He could not explain his own condition. It was simply a case of

“Like a man in wrath, the heart
Stood up and answered ‘I have felt.’”

Whitefield’s is alive with people who have had the same experience. The fact is, that it is possible to create an atmosphere into which no sceptic can come and remain a sceptic.

If ever the time comes for writing out in full the sacred, secret history of men I have known who have literally passed in experience from hell to heaven, space would have to be found for an account of one whose life-story from his own hand lies before me as I write. It is the biography of one whose father became “a low, spunging drunkard,” and one cold winter’s night “was picked up frozen to death.” The son, despite the tears

and prayers of his mother, followed his father’s steps into a life of vice. He does not spare himself. “Debauchery and degradation” are not mere words in his narrative. He had a stroke of luck in his marriage to a good woman; but even that did not prevent his drinking his way to bankruptcy more than once. He sets out in his chronicle, though with avowed shame, his meanness and trickery, his experiences of prison and all the rest of it. Then came the plea of an enthusiastic Men’s Meeting member that he would come and sample one of our meetings. He had prejudices to overcome, for in spite of his licentiousness he was “a Sunday Churchman”—I quote his words—and could not think a meeting in a Nonconformist meeting-house could be quite the thing. But he came; and now for years has been one of the most earnest and sacrificing of the band of missionaries who preach, in season and out of season, the Gospel of Christian Brother-

hood and Citizenship. He is too busy nowadays trying to get things done to be troubled by his old temptations.

Some people wonder why the criticisms of the less well-informed newspapers trouble us so little. With the faces of men around us who owe everything best in life to the inspiration of this assembly and the fellowship in service which they have found there, why should we be afflicted because some morbid and disgruntled outsider writes melancholy myths to a halfpenny paper? Some of these misanthropes have treasured up every wild saying, and every distorted report associated with men's meetings, and they have brooded over these unhappy memories until they have themselves become the victims of a kind of hideous nightmare. Hence the lurid descriptions with which they illuminate their awful columns. The unreality of it all fills one with astonishment; but it has long ceased to act as an irritant. Members of our meeting

have been well instructed to honour the commandment, “Thou shalt love thy critic as thyself.”

One criticism has, I confess, interested me. We of the Puritan ancestry have been so diligently accused of sourness and melancholy, that protests of indignation against our laughter and exhilaration have all the charm of novelty. I remember a Lancashire vicar who paid us a visit and was horrified to find that we made no pretence of not enjoying ourselves. Of course, it was not done in his way; and he had a perfect right to object that we appeared to him to be irreverent. When I read his rather petulant criticism my mind reverted to a sermon I heard of a preaching friar in St. Mark’s at Venice. He was evidently a homely priest, endowed with wit and humour, and the peasant folk laughed and cried by turns at his sallies. But he evidently got home to their hearts, much as old Latimer used to do at St. Paul’s Cross.

Nowadays our cramped conventions do not permit this freedom and naturalness. Hence our preternatural solemnity, which the good Lancashire vicar would make more rigorous, but which has lost us the common people, created a sense of unreality and artificiality which is making eager, vivid religious life unnecessarily difficult. We ask why, in the name of common sense, it is reverent to weep and irreverent to laugh? or why silence should be the only attitude consistent with religious dignity? It was not in degenerate days that Chrysostom stirred his hearers to tumultuous applause in church; and if the experience were to be repeated because men and women of to-day were similarly fired, how gladly should we forgive the breach of a convention in joy that a new flood of enthusiasm had overwhelmed us. I, at any rate, who have heard the huzzas of admiring zealots for the Pope in the Sistine Chapel at Rome, and have heard Westminster Abbey resound with

good, honest, hearty cheers for the King at his Coronation Service, and who could not detect anything irreverent in either the one or the other, am waiting to have it explained to me why equally enthusiastic cheers for principles, and not for persons, are irreverent and undevotional in a Nonconformist meeting-house on a Sunday afternoon. I will only add that if gaiety of spirit is a characteristic of the new Puritanism, it is not the less likely on that account to conquer our generation.

I shake the kaleidoscope again, and I see the Oxford Music Hall thronged with men. Whitefield's is, I know, similarly crowded at the same hour. The occasion is a mission to Central London, which Dr. Campbell Morgan is sharing with us. At the "Oxford" I am charged with the responsibility of making our appeal, and presenting our case, to this vast audience, which contains so large a proportion of the curious and

casual visitors. A few days later one of our weekly papers for the man about town had a long and sympathetic description of this meeting. Their criticisms were not barbed shafts, still less poisoned ones. But I remember one sentence in which the writer took the view that I must have known the point in my address at which religion passed into politics. He confessed that the address was founded on religious principles; and that it dealt with no phase of politics that could be described as "party." But it was openly and frankly political; and I must have known where lay the mystic frontier between the two kingdoms. Alas! I cannot enlighten my friendly critic; for in all honesty I do not know. Neither could another tell you who has, nevertheless, a right to be heard. He had been a detective; and one of his old pals came to see us shortly afterwards, to find out what on earth could have revolutionised a man like "so and so." The ex-

detective was in the Oxford Music Hall that afternoon; and from that hour dates his transfiguration. When, only the other day, he was brought to death’s door and had to endure a terrible operation, he said, “Tell Mr. Horne, five years ago I could not have gone through it.” Neither physically nor morally could he have faced it, before that experience in the Music Hall. Yet the vision he saw of a Christ-purified commonwealth was a vision that only mystified the secular reporter. He could not make out whether he was listening to religion or politics. He was confident that I could tell him if I would; and, alas! I do not know.

CHAPTER V

THE LAND OF SHINAR

IT was in the land of Shinar that mankind was first confounded by differences of language, according to the story in Genesis. I know now where the land lies. Modern Babel is at our back door. We are the literal hub of the universe. Outside Chicago we doubt whether you can find a more cosmopolitan crowd than ours. There are streets within a stone's throw in which you can hardly find a naturalised citizen to vote in an election. Bohemia and Alsatia can be travelled by any enterprising adventurer in our parts. We do not forget that we have associations with illustrious exiles. Hither came Josef Mazzini, and hither, in consequence, flocked that strange, bizarre crew that

preyed upon him. Somewhere underneath the present County Council gardens that surround Whitefield's sleeps the son of Karl Marx, and one often reconstructs in imagination the tragedy of that funeral day. The dark corners of our civilisation have been explored and disclosed by more than one man of genius. Did not George Gissing lurk in ambush here? and I suspect that "No. 5 John Street" is not far away.

Yet in the midst of us Constable transferred to canvas his own visions of the Suffolk lanes and fields, woods and rivers. To-day the land of Shinar is alive with strange visitors, weird and uncouth pilgrims who live, one hardly knows how, on foods mysterious to us, and in attics and cellars for which the hospitable English landlord sweats out of them their last denarius. Yet many others thrive after a fashion. They may be seen making odds and ends of furniture in the basements of houses that were once dis-

tinguished by famous baronial arms, and that are to-day warrens of tenements. Here is the Italian who has brought with him the skill in mosaic pavements that no other nationality has ever attained. The Scandinavian has followed his own pine wood to the place where it is wrought into chairs and chests. But it would take a more encyclopædic knowledge than mine to tell what magnetism has drawn most of this alien metal from lands of the sun and the blue sky to the gloomy and decayed streets where it is now to be found. The light of Whitefield's shines out upon the oddest chaos of creeds. The affirmations and negations of our district match the array of religionists who first marvelled at the mystery of Pentecost. Yet our neighbours have come to understand that we are not an English mission but a Christian mission ; and that we recognise no disabilities of language, habit or creed. We are all dwellers in the land of Shinar, happy if we can attain some

human understanding of one another. One of our curiosities is a bag of queer foreign coins contributed to our evening collections. There are not many European countries that are not represented. It is not always possible, by any means, to find some one on the place who can converse with our guests in their own language. But if they can speak only a little broken English we soon get on terms with them, and discover the truth of the saying of a good old friend of mine that all people are very much alike *inside*.

Apart from the Lutherans, few of our continental neighbours seem to bring any religion with them, unless antipathy to religion can be regarded as a variety. It is a pathetic thing to realise, as one is compelled to do, how nearly every great struggle for human liberty has been fought out against the forces of ecclesiasticism. The Frenchman, the Austrian, the Italian, the Russian, all tell the same tale in differing ways. The splendid

simplicity of the New Testament is wholly unknown to them. I remember how, in the early days, a Russian came to me after a service and asked what book that was from which I had been reading. He had come from a remote town in Russia to study social subjects, and I helped him to get a reader's ticket at the British Museum. He was terribly poor, and always looked half-starved, though he never complained or begged. He had never seen a Bible; but he told me naively that he had always believed there must be some reality behind the externalism that irritated and estranged him. It was wonderful to see how the New Testament "found him" when he came to it for the first time.

One day I received a magazine in which a young Austrian told his life story. At the time I did not know him, and was quite unaware that he was a member of our Men's Choir. He gave the article the title, "Roman Catholicism *versus* Whitefield's." He told

of his upbringing in Austria, of the impression produced upon him by the great, cold churches, and the sense that everything was done for you. Then the old rebellion against priestly authority broke out within him. His sister was taken away to a convent. He said good-bye to her through a *grille*. In six months he was told she was dead. He left Austria and came to England, his heart raging against Christianity. He believed the Church was the enemy of human nature. Its teaching and its obligations were unnatural. It was the enemy of the family; it was the enemy of happiness. One Sunday afternoon he became aware of a crowd of men streaming down the Tottenham Court Road. They were eager and cheerful. Evidently they were anticipating something good. To his amazement they were all going into a large church-building. He followed out of curiosity. The building was thronged with men. The platform was also occupied with men,

but he saw no sacerdotal vestments. The hymns were sung with magnificent effect. They emphasised the social mission of Christ and the Church. The prayer was a simple plea for the help of God. The lesson was a few verses of Christ's own matchless words. The address was given by a Labour Member of Parliament, and it was intensely religious and relentlessly practical. The young man felt that here was the real thing. This was the natural human faith to which all his soul responded. He saw Christianity no longer as the enemy of the home and of the State, but as the champion of freedom, brotherhood and humanity : not the impoverisher of life, but the enricher of life. He became an enthusiastic friend of Whitefield's, and, with the help of an English comrade, wrote the article to which I have referred. Our French friends have been many, and their faces are with me as I write. Some of them are missionaries of the spirit of the Revolution.

Some of them love France but bewail the impossible attempt to harmonise Liberty and Conscription. One of them, whom we all have come to regard with sincere affection, still argues at length for purely rationalistic interpretations, but is never lacking now in respect for the simple Christianity he has learned to understand better. As for a man's theories, we all grow more and more tolerant, believing that the one thing that matters in religious discussions is a certain attitude of reverence and charity; and *that* seldom or never fails us.

One of the warmest of my French friends was a good-looking and vivacious Parisian. For wife he had a clever, musical English-woman, whose one fault it was that she occasionally gave way hopelessly to drink. My first personal relations with him were in a successful endeavour to persuade him to go back to his wife after a peculiarly terrible outbreak. They lived together for two or three years in great happiness and much

prosperity, proud of one another, and devoted to Whitefield's. Then she fell from grace again; and nothing would satisfy him but to sell everything up and go off to Paris. One evening I hurried back from the House of Commons, and spent hours wrestling with them in my room at Whitefield's, till they promised to forgive and forget. But as they left me I felt the matter was beyond my control. The separation came a few hours later; for she went off to the public-house, and when next I heard of him he was in France, and she was anywhere where drink was to be had. Even the most Christlike effort of one of our ladies to take her in and look after her failed. She seemed to have made up her mind to follow the dark descent to the end. He wrote me in despair that he heard nothing of her or from her. We lost sight of the wife altogether. Then one day a letter came from Paris. He had been ill, at death's door, and she had arisen and gone

to him, and nursed him “like an angel.” Somehow, even the end of the idyll was French.

It is one of the characteristics of our people that they are not ashamed to confess what they owe to the place. There is my vivacious French friend, who was surely one of the most sensational secretaries who ever ran a club, and who now electrifies even rustic audiences by the vigour and vehemence of his vocabulary. He will rise up and tell his fellows of his own rescue from the abyss. Not that he was more than an occasional visitant; but he had tasted the terror of it, and Whitefield’s led him away to those higher interests which cancel all the lower lusts. He is now an effectual evangelist to others who are in peril.

And what about my old friend, “the Colonel”? He fought for the North in the American Civil War, rode with Sherman, and knew Lincoln. He can be trusted to thrill

his hearers with many stirring adventures of that heroic period. But I am certain that in his estimate no hour of his life was so momentous as the hour when he flung away a cigar in the Tottenham Court Road one Sunday afternoon, and came in with the crowd to see this strange sight, and found a new life and service. Something of the old Covenanter faith which he inherited in the Scottish home he had not seen for half a century came back to him, but liberalised and modernised. For he had literally fled from that home when a youth, in rebellion against an iron creed and its stern, loveless discipline. When he saw the same essential faith, in its gracious human setting, he came back to it like a little child.

With all its superficial confusion there is a common language of humanity in the Land of Shinar. Lord Bacon points out that "all colours agree in the dark"; and in our "Poverty Flats" all creeds blend, or merge

into the one creed which is a belief in love. One day I was out canvassing, endeavouring to persuade my neighbours that I was fitted to represent them on the County Council. In a third floor back there was an old lady who was on the municipal register. She was very infirm, but her single room was a picture of neatness. I found that some forty people were living in the house. "We know of forty," she whispered, suggesting that there might be a few more whom nobody knew. I had noticed that there was apparently only one water-tap for the house, and that was on the ground floor. This she confirmed; and when I asked her how she got her water up to the top of the house, she told me a beautiful story. A French woman from the other end of the street had called in to visit a fellow countrywoman in this house, and hearing casually of this infirm old lady in a back room at the top of the house, had straightway gone up and offered to come in every day and carry

up water for her. This she did month after month, with many added kindnesses. Between the two there was no racial tie. They could not even speak the same language. One was a Protestant and the other a Catholic. But they were "neighbours" in Christ's great sense of the word, and that was enough. I saw the good Samaritan before leaving the house. She had the bright face and animated manner of her race, and made nothing of her self-appointed task. She was a dweller in a mean street whom no street could make mean; and she was not discouraged by the linguistic chaos of the land of Shinar.

It is one of life's little ironies that these noble deeds have no record. They are copy for no journalist. The heroine's photo is not wanted for any daily paper. But for the evil deeds which should be forgotten there is fame, and possibly a gruesome immortality in the Chamber of Horrors. This was forced

upon me when I first became familiar with "the murder site," a mere sinister gap between two houses in the street immediately at the rear of my church. Then we dug out the police records, and read the grim story. It was a common Alsatian tragedy. All the actors were foreigners, and the problems suggested by the murder were those in which our district abounds. When all was over the house was examined, and found to be so horrible that it was pulled down by order of the County Council, and nothing but the site and a blackened beam or two remained. Somehow, the very site had a trick of getting on your nerves. It became a receptacle for all sorts of evil refuse. The children called it "the murder site." When inquiries were made, it seemed as if nobody would confess to the ownership of it. At last we discovered where the landlord was to be found; and a generous cheque from the late Sir Horace Regnart—one of the kindest of helpers—

made it mine. We built a house on the spot, which was first of all inhabited by sisters of the poor, and afterwards adapted for the purposes of a *crèche* for poor children; so that we have built out an evil memory, and built a home of good and happy memories instead. With which reflection we may say farewell for the present to the Land of Shinar.



"NO QUEST NO CONQUEST."

(*Banner designed and painted by Hugh Rivière, Esq.*)

CHAPTER VI

THE PAX HUMANA

IT is our belief that when any one joins the Church of Christ he enlists under the Flag of Humanity; and that the Banner of the Cross is superior to all national and imperial emblems. This would seem to be an accepted truism, yet no proposition is more fiercely contested. Indeed, it is sometimes considered a part of patriotism to deny this. Notwithstanding St. Paul's teaching that it is the work of Christianity to produce the mind to which there is neither Jew, Greek, Barbarian nor Scythian, and we may surely add English, French, German nor Russian, Christianity is habitually used to emphasise the sense of nationality in hostility to the claims and rights of all other nations.

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We resolved, therefore, from the first, to use our open platform to advocate a good understanding with sister peoples, to cultivate goodwill towards all, and especially towards any with whom there might be danger of friction; to insist steadily on the policy of arbitration as applicable to all international disputes; and to discourage the increase of armaments as being provocative of militarism in other lands. Possibly our own cosmopolitan mission in London had prepared us to appreciate the folly and criminality of military aggression against our European neighbours. Possibly, too, the bitter lessons learned during the Boer War were fresh in our minds ten years ago; and we were in a position to understand how easily unjust thoughts and words about one another lead to deeds of violence. Be that as it may, no plank in our platform has been more welcome. At the very time when popular feeling has been excited by press and platform against Germany, we have held the

most magnificent meetings in appreciation of those qualities in the two peoples, and events in their history which forbid the very thought of war. It is an easily ascertained fact that among the mass of rational workmen there is no feeling of hostility to Germany, but a very genuine feeling of brotherhood towards German workmen. I remember reading aloud at one of our Whitefield meetings, from an influential morning paper, the sentence "France and Germany are natural enemies because they are next-door neighbours." It was received with such a shout of laughter as it would have done the editor good to hear. If the Christianity of two thousand years has brought us no farther than that we are the natural enemies of the man who lives next door, we must certainly look out for some new religion that will end this bigotry and fanaticism. But the fact is that our working people are the most Christian part of our population. That is to say, they do really entertain Christian sentiments,

and desire a new society based upon them. In the nature of things there is no more reason why France should arm to the teeth against Germany, than why St. Pancras should arm against Holborn. There is no more reason why the Germans should cross the North Sea and invade England than why the good people of Norwich should march forth to seize and plunder the shops of the good people of Ipswich. The whole idea is the nightmare of a delirious imagination. But for that very reason there is no way of arguing it down. It is one of the foolish irrational prejudices against which the weapons of reason are powerless.

These prejudices, however, which resist argument, give way before experience. The only way to remove these groundless suspicions and misunderstandings is the living way—the way of personal contact between the rival races. That is the way by which we discover all that we have in common, and realise that our destinies must be worked out

in co-operation and not in mere jealous and unfriendly competition. The first real event tending to quicken the Church's sense of her mission to allay international friction and foment goodwill was the visit to England of a deputation from the German Churches—Lutheran and Catholic—in 1908. The excellent addresses delivered counted for much; but the *camaraderie*, and the glow of real affection and admiration counted for more. The Christian spirit communicated itself through all defects of grammar and strangeness of pronunciation. The keen sympathetic audience seized upon the meaning of their guest and adopted it and him. In some cases friendships were sealed by the, to us, novel ritual of the "holy kiss." So far as I could learn nobody was any the worse for it, even though the ceremony was performed in public and with a vigour that left nothing to be desired. It was an occasion for mutual appreciation which went far to discount the systematic depreciations in

the baser press of both countries. Looking back, it seems almost incredible that even then terror was being excited by stories of phantom ships only seen by night. I pointed out that these fearsome vessels appeared at the time when the public-houses closed ; and that the longer a man sat in a public-house the more air-ships he saw when he came out. The story of these ships caused our visitors such Teufelsdröckian laughter as would have strained less robust constitutions. But the stories have become hardy annuals since then, and to-day are so stale as scarcely to excite a flutter of merriment. This visit was organised on our side of the North Sea by the London Free Church Council; but the movement soon assumed wider proportions; and when the return visit to Germany was made all our British Churches—Protestant and Catholic—were worthily represented. My men's meeting gave me an overwhelming God-speed the Sunday previous to our sailing; and if possible an even more moving

welcome when I got back from Berlin. They felt themselves included in the invitation extended to me; and from that day on never lost an opportunity of expressing their deep and true sympathy with the German people. It is not for me to write here the story of that memorable visit, which to every one who took part in it constituted an epoch in his life. It was not the lavishness of the hospitality so much as the graciousness of the spirit that conquered us. We were prepared for much kindness, but not for such irresistible generosity of thought, speech and action.

Yet the time was a critical one. One of the periodical scares was being worked up by the anti-German press in England and the anti-English press in Germany. The atmosphere was electrical; and it would have surprised nobody if the storm had burst somewhere. In the frankness of conversation we heard much of the criminal follies and stupidities that often do irreparable mischief between governments. We learned

at first-hand how eager the press is to circulate every foolish article or bellicose speech, written or spoken by irresponsible journalist, politican or retired officer who is properly discounted in his own country, but in other countries has the mysterious importance that attaches to the unknown. We had many opportunities of testing the feeling of the people, whether associated with the Churches or not, and it was abundantly evident that that feeling of goodwill is always inadequately represented and often grossly misrepresented in the diplomatic warfare between rival powers. I had the honour of speaking for my countrymen at a great conversazione in Berlin, and expounded the theme that was almost aggressively obvious there that we were all "made in Germany," and that wherever we went we knew ourselves among kinsfolk. The destiny of England is sometimes in dispute. But if the Saxon is not sure whither he goeth, he knows quite well whence he cometh.

The true view of England, however, is that she has been marvellously fashioned by Providence for the mission of mediator among the nations. She can take no stock in the enmities of France and Germany, for she is half Saxon and half Norman. She has been ruled by Roman, Frenchman and German; ruled by the Celt and ruled by the Scot. She recks little of race, lineage or language. She knows that every element that has come into her life from outside, and that is to-day powerful alike in blood and brain has gone to make her real wealth of character and capacity. Internationalism is her appropriate gospel. She has been well schooled to the love of all men. Every conqueror has blessed her, whether he was a Latin, a Gaul or a Goth. The virtues of her character have been compounded in the marvellous alembic of history. To-day she ought to recognise her friends in the countenance of every great European people. If we could imagine the Tiber, the Loire and

the Scheldt giving of their waters to make up the volume of the Thames, we should find it impossible at once to thank God for the noble river of England, and at the same time to cherish resentment against the lands that nursed the tributary fountains from which her strength and beauty flowed.

There was one thing better than going to a European land on an errand of peace, and that was to go in a goodly company of friends and associates. The idea of paying a visit to Paris laid hold of the imagination of our men at Whitefield's, and in the end a hundred and twenty of us—mostly workmen—made the adventure. With us went eighty representatives of other Brotherhoods. We went at the Easter season, and spent three days in Paris and one on the return journey at Rouen. Some of our number even contrived an extra day at Havre. Every hour of our time in France was golden. It is not easy with the best organisation in the world

to "do" Paris in three days, to say nothing of Versailles. But short as the time was it was long enough to realise the great events that go to make up the mystery and magic of Paris. You must go to the gayest of all capitals for the darkest tragedies of European history—Saint Bartholomew's Day and the horrors of the Revolution. Nowhere else are such sermons preached on the Nemesis of unbridled luxury and unscrupulous ambition as at the Palace of Versailles and Napoleon's tomb. But when you have made every allowance for the fascination of ancient memories, it is only a churl who does not lose his heart to the witchery of modern Paris. And to us the famous city was all smiles and sunshine. This visit left me wondering how little language counts; for my friends, whose French was not extensive, extracted information from all sorts and conditions of people, and before they left Paris knew the price of most articles of diet and clothing, and the wages paid for most of the elementary

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services which the workpeople of a city
render.

But the crowning event of the visit was the afternoon meeting on Easter Sunday in the famous Protestant Church, the Oratoire. Our Protestant friends had been somewhat apprehensive about this, and had warned us not to expect too much. Yet seldom in its history has the great building been so thronged. Priests were there, and army officers, and journalists, and politicians. Illustrious Protestant families were represented—a Monod, a d'Aubigné, a Pressensé. A deputy of the French Parliament offered prayer. Great historic hymns were sung; and at least one English chorus by the Whitefield's men. Then some of us spoke; and even through an interpreter you felt the throb that is universal whenever thousands of hearts respond to the same human appeal. Because it is typical of that new Brotherhood message which is surely destined to sway the peoples, I am going to reprint here the

speech which it was my own privilege to deliver.

“We have come to meet you and to greet you that we may rejoice together in all that we have in common. By the principles we cherish all distance is annihilated. If it is not far from London to Paris, it is an even shorter distance from the land of Whitefield to the land of Bossuet, from the land of Latimer to the land of Coligny, and from the land of Gladstone to the land of Gambetta. It is written of the great world-wide Brotherhood movement that there shall be no more sea. Those who are one in the spirit of Christ and the service of Humanity know no estrangements. When we plead for the poor and the oppressed, when we protest against injustice, when we pray against the power of social and moral iniquity, we may be French or English, but we speak one language.

“Sirs, the times are changing. A new age is at the door. Old institutions are shaping

themselves anew. Old watchwords are receiving new translations. The Church of Christ is being transformed before our eyes. The old inspiration of the Gospel is with us, but our methods, our institutions, and even our ideals are all being transmuted that we may serve our generation more wisely and efficiently. The same aspiration is in all our souls. It is, in the words of a famous Church historian, ‘a Church wide as human life and deep as human need.’ A Church that has room in her borders for all that is human except class-hatred, national antagonism and ecclesiastical bigotry.

“The Church must be big enough and brave enough to face her mission. It is ‘*L’audace, et encore l’audace et toujours l’audace.*’ We have the inspiration for our work in our essential faith. The paradox of Christianity is this—*Sonship to the Highest means Brotherhood to the lowest.* Remember, once in this city of Paris you turned the place of your ugliest memories into a Place de la

Concorde. It is for the Church to turn the ugly memories, the narrow, bitter prejudices, the cruelties, the vanities of the nations into a sublime Place de la Concorde. We want, in other words, a new, a real Catholic Church, of men and women whose hearts are catholic, and who love and serve one another for Christ's sake.

"I believe such a Church may be, because I have myself seen a Church grow up in the midst of the city, having a central inspiration, and a framework of institutions adapted to the needs of all, and with no exclusive tests to keep any one outside her borders. What we seek is a Church of the people and for the people, where those who come are valued not for their money, or their position, or their culture—not even for what of the Christian creed they profess, but what of the Christian spirit they possess and express.

"The great glory of our united races will be when we substitute for all the tinsel glories of a world founded on show and on force the

real and spiritual glories of a new world founded on truth and love. Then we shall sing a new Marseillaise—

“Le jour de gloire est arrivé.”

We need you. We need your artistic sense, your eloquence, your idealism, your chivalry. We would fain have them all; for we are a Free Trade country, and our gates are open continually. We hope you feel you need us too. We are clumsy of movement and slow of speech, but we are loyal and faithful, and our people in its heart loves justice and hates oppression.

“Once more let us grasp hands. Walt Whitman said, ‘We two must grasp each other’s hands because we are alive together.’ We also are alive together in this modern world, and we have discovered a common mission to win these democracies of ours for New Testament principles and the social Reformation. Verily, we can do more for Humanity with the Sermon on the Mount

than with all the Dreadnoughts and armies on which we are wasting our resources.

“We do not grasp hands because of old-time associations merely. We have fought one another more than we have loved one another. We have been sundered not by the seas, but by our jealousies and misunderstandings and grasping ambitions. But to-day we are alive together, to enlighten and inspire one another; and to serve humanity by giving practical expression to the divine principles of ‘Liberty, Fraternity and Equality.’ For those principles were not the creation of your Revolution. They were born in the outbuildings of an inn at Bethlehem; they grew to fullness of stature in a carpenter’s shop; and they rose to glorious life out of the grave where bigotry, pride and prejudice had buried them, on Easter morning nineteen hundred years ago.”

CHAPTER VII

THE BOOK OF EXODUS

AT a great centre like Whitefield's one is able to form some conception how rapidly the ties multiply that bind us to our overseas dominions, and to the great Western Republic. During the last ten years nothing has astonished me more than the broadening tide of emigration. It is literally true to say that hundreds of men have gone from Whitefield's to found homes in Canada, Australia, New Zealand and South Africa. They usually carry some credentials with them; and in at least one case this proved of unexpected service. One day the post brought me an official letter from Canada, announcing the death by drowning of a young fellow who had gone out from us. It seems that in

the winter-time he had decided to go south and endeavour to add to his income in one of the towns. His team of horses was found where the ice on the river had given way, and it was assumed that his body was under the ice. The officials took charge of his cabin; and there they found a book signed by me as president of our men's meeting. They wrote to ask me if I knew whether he had a father or mother living, as they would be entitled to his property. We communicated with the mother; but shortly afterwards a letter arrived, which set all doubts at rest. The boy was alive. He had lost his team, but he had escaped, and had gone south according to his programme. He is one of the many who are doing well, though the work is hard, and the life often lonely. Few months pass without some records reaching us of perils survived and enterprises made good. This man has escaped at Regina, where the tornado has killed or ruined so many of his

neighbours; this one was in the midst of the great flood at Dayton, Ohio, and writes vividly of his adventures; and yet another has passed through almost every phase of the struggle for existence in California, and has never, even in the tightest places, forgotten to preach the social reformation through spiritual agencies. Most of those who go are young fellows who have enough ambition and determination to risk everything in a land that offers more promise than the old country. Some of them are worn-out with the long hours spent behind the counter. One day four young men came to say good-bye to me. They were off to Queensland. They did not expect to find a bed of roses, but they did think they would have a little time to call their own. They were all grocers' assistants; and the hours they had been working in London were scandalous. They had no time for pleasure or for self-improvement. It was an endless treadmill

from week-end to week-end, and they were sick of it. One hated to have them go, but who of us would care to wear life out under these conditions and with no prospect to speak of? So, one after another, they "pack their kit and trek"; and when we next hear of them they are growing peaches in Ontario or sheep-farming under the Southern Cross.

When my famous predecessor, George Whitefield, was alive, he made a record in voyages across the Atlantic; and though he never forgave the Americans of his time for their objections to be taxed by a Parliament in which they had no representation, he nevertheless travelled and preached much in America, and eventually died there in 1770. I myself had the grim privilege of beholding his skull and skeleton in the eerie crypt where these relics repose in the Newburyport Presbyterian Church. If I am to believe the moving story told me by a clairvoyant verger, the actual spirit of Whitefield has conversed

with him in the church beneath which the great evangelist is buried. Whitefield's fame, and the known fact that we possess so many interesting memorials of him, brings troops of Americans yearly to our historic site; and probably there is no church in London where more English and Americans meet than here. So many leading American ministers and laymen had preached and spoken for us, that when I went to America in 1911 it was in the hope of being able to reduce our debt to them by rendering some reciprocal services.

It was an interesting time. A momentous debate had taken place in the House of Commons, in the course of which Sir Edward Grey had spoken with impressive earnestness about the increase of armaments, and had indicated as the one hopeful factor in a dark situation the possibility of our accepting the proposals outlined by President Taft in favour of an Arbitration Treaty between

America and England—the treaty to include all possible matters of dispute. Sir Edward Grey's speech produced a remarkable effect. Great towns' meetings were held throughout the land; and men of all creeds and parties united in demonstrations of approval. It fell to my lot to speak repeatedly on the subject in some of our big centres of population; and one of my main reasons for going to America at that juncture, was to have an opportunity of speaking to representative audiences of Americans from the English point of view.

Leaving Liverpool on the eventful day on which the Parliament Act was passed in the House of Lords, and by the last ship that got away before the memorable railway strike, I posted o'er land and water without rest in order to be at Winona, near Chicago, in time to preach the opening sermon of one of the great inland conventions for which America is famous in the summer months.

It is difficult to make the average Englishman understand these vast gatherings of people in whose minds a process of fermentation is set up by the influence of such miscellaneous meetings and speakers as are associated with Winona and Chautauqua, and a score of other places. Let him imagine a lake-side, ringed round with the forest primeval, and with here and there a river which, as it flows darkly through the pine-trees, suggests Indian canoes and wigwams, and all the fascinations of Fenimore Cooper. Modern châlets and bungalows are scattered among the trees or front the lake. An hotel or two, a few shops, and then a vast auditorium, the sides of which are open so that many thousands of hearers can listen to the speaker. From his platform the preacher, or lecturer, sees not only the four or five thousand people seated within the building, but hundreds, or possibly thousands, more outside, and the whole scene having for its background the

dark green trees and the verdant sward. Aside from the auditorium there is at Winona a natural amphitheatre, where a simple open-air rostrum has been erected; and here, while the sun set in flame behind the forest, and the lake was one glory of crimson and gold, I have seen thousands of people at worship, and heard the refrains of great hymns and choruses, bringing back to me the famous lines descriptive of the landing of the Pilgrim Fathers—

“And the sounding aisles of the dim woods rang
To the anthem of the free.”

When you are used to the novelty of the environment, you discover that the audience is as interesting as the place. It is a typical audience of the mid-west. Ministers and evangelists are here in hundreds; school teachers are even more numerous; and for the rest you may meet and talk everywhere with men and women who are thinking out

afresh, in this most virile of all centuries, the problems of religion, of morals and of economics, and who are, one and all, experimenting in some field of social betterment. The atmosphere of Winona is distinctly evangelical. The note of individual regeneration is sounded at every session. Yet nowhere did I find a keener consciousness of the necessity that Gospel and law should go hand in hand; and nowhere did I find a more living interest in the modern social movement in Great Britain. It is the literal truth to say that the one political figure on our side who has struck the imagination of America and captured its sympathies is Mr. Lloyd George. To the average American many of the names most familiar to us mean nothing; but it was quite a usual thing, when speaking about England and her problems, to be interrupted by a shout of "Tell us about Lloyd George." This is due to two things. In the first place, they admire the

courage and directness with which he has sought to deal with poverty and disease. But in the second place, they like the man whose life is itself a romance; and *From Log Cabin to White House* has its parallel in the history of a lad, born of peasant stock, who made his way upward by his own unassisted genius to one of the foremost positions in the empire. Alike the personality and the achievements of the Chancellor of the Exchequer have made him a hero with the American democracy.

On my last day at Winona I spoke to a vast audience on "the Brotherhood movement." I dwelt especially on the new-born shame among us in England at the appalling inequalities of life. This shame is, I think, the latest phase of the Christian consciousness; and it will do much for us. It finds expression in Mr. William Watson's magnificent *National Anthem*, which we constantly sing at Whitefield's—

“Too long the gulf betwixt
This man and that man fixt
Yawns yet unspanned :
Too long that some may rest,
Tired millions toil unblest ;
God bless our lowliest,
God save our Land.”

When I quoted these lines it was easy to see that America was as keenly conscious of the problem they indicate as we are. After describing some of the new victories of the spirit of Brotherhood in my own country, I spoke of the triumphs yet to be won in the field of international relations, and delivered my message in support of President Taft’s policy of permanent Arbitration Treaties, making my appeal in the form of the proposition that we should “make the Atlantic Ocean the *Pacific* Ocean.” It is my experience that no appeal to America on the basis of the part she may play in the great drama of world-peace is ever made in vain. Certainly at Winona the effect was quite wonderful; for the great multitude rose, and with

wavings of handkerchiefs sealed a covenant, so far as they were concerned, to make perpetual peace with all European peoples who will entertain such proposals.

From Winona I passed on to Chautauqua, which is not only the original of all summer schools, but remains the most popular and fascinating. I was just in time for the impressive closing sessions. The audiences at Chautauqua are representative of the whole of the States; and it may truly be said that few institutions have done more to bridge the gulf between the North and the South than Chautauqua has done. I had hardly been in the place an hour before I found myself speaking at a crowded extemporised meeting in one of the many beautiful "temples." Once again the subject chosen was the practical association of the spiritual and the social; in other words, Christianity and citizenship. One has to realise how much America has suffered by the withdrawal

from politics of multitudes of its best people, because of the corruption and brutality associated with boss-rule, and the power of the machine, to understand the keen interest that is taken in this problem, and the welcome given to any speaker who can tell of experiments made. Nothing is more delightful than the fusillade of courteous questions when the address is over, and nothing helps the speaker to a better understanding of his audience.

After Chautauqua it was my privilege to enjoy a round of meetings and banquets in New England, in which the genius of the American people for hospitality to strangers found ample expression. In New York, Brooklyn, Boston and Philadelphia I met the leading ministers and laymen under the most delightful social auspices, and inflicted more speeches upon them than I care to think of. The charm of these functions in America is that ecclesiastical distinctions can hardly be

said to exist. The Episcopal minister—be he a Bishop or an untitled pastor—meets, as a matter of course, with his brethren of other denominations. He meets with Presbyterians, Methodists and Congregationalists, with whom he from time to time exchanges pulpits in token of the practical unity that exists between them. True, you may hear of some Episcopal divine who declines these fraternal relations, having conveyed across the Atlantic, with his other luggage, certain narrow and foolish Anglican notions; but he is regarded by his own people as something of a crank and a faddist. The normal attitude of the Episcopalian to other Protestant Christians is one of fraternal co-operation; and there is no suggestion that his own special creeds or rubrics disable him from preaching in other pulpits or inviting their occupants to preach in his. It is beyond question that this broad and sensible spirit has strengthened the position of the Epis-

copal Church in the esteem and affection of the American people, who have awarded Bishop Phillips Brooks a niche in their temple of saints along with David Brainerd, Horace Bushnell and Jonathan Edwards. It is only fair to say that there was a time when the Episcopal Church was looked upon with suspicion, in consequence of its exclusive attitude on the other side of the Atlantic; and in consequence an attitude of equal illiberality and intolerance was bred among the Puritan Churches. President Wilson told me the excellent story of old Dr. McCosh of Princeton, to whom a measure of co-operation was once suggested on the basis of the Apostles' Creed. "No, no!" said he defiantly, "I will not 'descend into Hell' with the *Episcopalians*!"

While staying at Boston I took the opportunity to present a letter from Mr. Bryce to President Taft, at his summer residence in Beverley. Nothing could possibly have been

more cordial than the President's reception, and he allowed us to make a large inroad on a vacation day to talk about the prospects of arbitration between the two nations. He foresaw at that time the difficulties that would arise in his own Senate; but neither he nor any one could have foreseen then that the situation would be made more difficult for him by the rejection of the reciprocity proposals by Canada. President Taft struck me as a model of good sense and good temper in his frank discussion of the difficulties he had to face; and even his references to Mr. Roosevelt were genial, even though his criticisms were quite spirited. But it was when I described to him the scene in the House of Commons, when Sir Edward Grey practically adopted Mr. Taft's suggestion of universal arbitration so far as America and England are concerned, that I had a revelation as to the profound sincerity and earnestness of the President. He was visibly

affected; and it was not difficult to see that he had the advantage over Mr. Roosevelt of a law training, which naturally disposed him towards argument and evidence, rather than rifles and machine-guns, as the proper weapons for deciding international disputes. A week or two later I called at Trenton, by appointment, on Dr. Woodrow Wilson, then Governor of New Jersey. At that time he was comparatively little known in our country; but for some years I had followed his career with keen interest and growing confidence. That brief time spent with him confirmed me in the conviction that the Democrats had a great leader in the ex-President of Princeton University. Some few men dominate you by what we are wont to speak of as the magnetism of their personality; and Dr. Wilson simply radiates vitality. It was at the close of our interview that I asked him frankly whether, if the Democrats won, they would be as friendly toward England as the Republicans had

shown themselves. Of Dr. Wilson's personal attitude I did not need to be told. He is an old lover of England, her literature and her people. But he gave me with great cordiality the assurance I sought, and then turned the tables very fairly on me by asking what we in England were going to do to make the path of reconciliation easier. What about Ireland? It was the old question. He assured me that since he had gone into public life he had learned much of the grievances of those Irish who were driven out of Ireland with great cruelty, and whose descendants have not forgotten nor forgiven the circumstances of their exile. "But," I pleaded, "suppose we consent to Home Rule?" Dr. Wilson was emphatic that the passing of Home Rule would sound the death-knell of Irish hostility to Great Britain, so far as America was concerned. He also hoped that England would work towards better relations with Germany, so that the last obstacles to permanent peace between

the English and American peoples might disappear.

It is interesting to discover how complex our problems are, and that you cannot advance the cause of righteousness in any part of the world unless you are prepared to do justice in every part. Since that, to me, memorable day Woodrow Wilson has become President of the United States, and is bravely facing colossal problems of government and legislation, with the goodwill of all good citizens. Mr. Bryan is putting into practical proposals those convictions in favour of international peace which are held, I believe, by the best Christians on both sides of the ocean. We on this side are trying to vanquish old animosities, and close an old wound, by reconciling the Irish all the world over by the gift of self-government to Ireland. I hope to see these two policies, that make for peace everywhere in the English-speaking lands, crowned with success.



THE INEVITABLE WAR.

(Cartoon by Sir Francis C. Gould.)

CHAPTER VIII

KING ALCOHOL }

ALONG the Tottenham Court Road, and to the west of it, King Alcohol dwells prosperously in his palaces. In the streets to the rear of Whitefield's there are all the characteristic evidences of his rule. In the bad old days when it was not considered "the thing" for Churches to say anything about social politics, licences were granted by the hundred in that district and no objection offered. The "saints" were absorbed in their devotions. They made merry, with due propriety, at their tea-parties; and they enjoyed the picturesque discourses with which their preacher regaled them. Moreover, they believed in the power of their Gospel to reclaim the poor lost victims of the saloons;

and as we all know, many such were snatched as brands from the burning, and the miracle of the humanly impossible did frequently happen.

But their thoughts were on the remedy, not on the prevention of the disease. The manufactories of wastrels and criminals became yearly more numerous and more busy. Respectable streets degenerated into slums. This drink-surfeited neighbourhood possessed irresistible attraction for those who ply the filthy trade of lust, for those who make the gamester's life a profession, and for the potential criminals who see in London a city where men and women can live by their wits. All this process of demoralisation went on, so far as I can learn, without any attempt on the part of the Churches to put up a fight against the multiplication of temptations. The two worlds never clashed because they had different orbits. The Church did not trouble the world nor the world the Church. They

did not think or speak much about one another, except in the vague, general phrases which break no bones, and reduce no dividends. When the temperance appeal began to be heard, it was too late. The land was held by chains of powerful block-houses; and the attempt to dislodge the enemy seemed hopeless. There was nothing for the Church member to do but to shake his head over the situation and thank God that all will be well on the other side the Jordan. That is an illustration of how evil first thrives on the apathy and negligence of those who, if we come to think of it, are organised to fight against it; and then corrupts the doctrine of the Church into a false and base other-worldliness.

The situation has not been made easier in our time by the policy of modernising the public-house, and making it more sumptuous and externally attractive. More wise than the children of light, who continue to expect

tired workmen to spend their nights in badly lighted mission-rooms, sitting on stiff and straight-backed forms, surrounded by bare and often dirty walls, the brewer and distiller have associated with their tied houses all kinds of luxuries and amusements. I once got a good round subscription by a quotation from *Paradise Lost* illustrative of John Milton's conception of evil—

“High on a throne of royal state, which far
Outshone the wealth of Ormuz or of Ind,
Or where the gorgeous East, with lavish hands,
Shows on her sons barbaric pearl and gold,
Satan exalted sat.”

I am not sure it was not the only subscription I have ever owed to Satan; but my hearer recognised the truth that evil to-day is splendid and magnificent in aspect, and housed in barbaric pearl and gold. We all know how brilliant are the lights around which the helpless human moths flutter to their doom. Moreover, if we had to live as

these people live we should probably spend our evenings as they spend them. They find at the public-house what they are in search of—a welcome, social companionship, light, warmth, comfort, excitement, recreation and oblivion. In the well-known phrase it is “the shortest way out of Manchester.” I question whether any Church has earned the right to denounce the public-house that has not made some sacrificial attempt to substitute something better. We know now that our negations will never give us a purer or happier society. Some contribution we are bound to make towards the healthier social order.

On positive lines we did what we could. We built our clubs on to Whitefield Street as well as on to the Tottenham Court Road. We provided billiards, reading-rooms, lounges, games of all kinds, and songs of all varieties except the variety of indecency. We have had great success with

our clubs, but I frankly confess that clubs with a subscription, however low, cannot compete with the saloon into which any one can walk whenever he or she pleases, and join in the life of the place. I still cherish the ambition that Whitefield's may some day run a real public-house, independent of the sceptre of King Alcohol, but with all the opportunities for social comradeship and recreation which the most attractive saloon can produce.

I wish the noble army of critics who rail at us would really face the social situation as we have to face it three hundred and sixty-five days in the year. They would agree with us more and swear at us less. One Sunday evening a young fellow who had sampled every variety of social vice was crossing the Tottenham Court Road to join some pals who were accustomed to meet outside the Apollo public-house. They were frequenters of that house, and though it was

not open on Sunday evenings, they made it a rendezvous. Crowds of people were streaming into Whitefield's for the evening service. A cornet solo was being played, and the strains were heard out in the road. The friend in question was an old guardsman, and the cornet appealed to him. He told me afterwards he made several attempts to cross to the Apollo; but it was "as if a hand was on my shoulder." He could not go. He summed the situation up by saying it was "pull Apollo, pull Whitefield's." Whitefield's pulled the stronger, and he went in, and became one of the active workers. It is always like that. There must be some "pull" against the "pull" of the drink. Yet if the Church of to-day seeks to lessen the force of the "pull" which the licensed houses can exert by lessening the number of those houses, all the pietists arise and cry, "No politics."

I despair of conveying to any reader my

own sense of the gravity and urgency of this problem. If the Church is to go out of politics, you may be quite sure the public-house will not; and the public-house stands to-day for a number of selfish allied interests which stand together, and work together and vote together. No man in all London has a higher opinion than I have of the police force taken as a whole; but it is idle to shut one's eyes to the ceaseless attempts at corruption made by the publican—attempts which necessarily result in some measure of success. Complaints are constantly made that the law is not put in force and that liquor is served to those who have already had too much. When offences are punished, it is the wretched victim who pays the cost, not the landlord who either tempted him or consented to his demands. The man in the street laughs, and says that the landlords never forget to square the police. I do not know to what extent some of the police are corrupted; but I am

quite sure that policemen who are active and vigilant in endeavouring to cleanse some of our Augean stables are not too popular with the authorities, and they themselves certainly have the idea that the path of promotion does not lie that way. But it is not merely a question of the police. The public-house is the curse of London politics, and especially municipal politics. Within its "parlour" policies are debated and settled; and such are the relations of friendship subsisting often between local councillors and local publicans that anything like a disinterested zeal for a higher standard of social well-being cannot be looked for. Over against these combinations stand the divided Churches, halting between two opinions, more afraid of one another than of any social plague, occasionally touching one another's fingers in cold courtesy, but seldom or never really joining hands. Little wonder that the public-house has the field to itself, and that

its signature is written large, in poverty and crime, over all the crowded and incestuous rookeries that are the shame of our civilisation and the despair of our reformers.

But why not take the field at the licensing sessions for a reduction of licensed houses? After all, licensing magistrates to-day are reasonable, and it is not in the public interest that there should be an undue number of public-houses. All very true. But in an area like ours the reduction of licensed houses under the Balfour Act of 1902 is incredibly slow; and, as everybody knows, the Act was passed for the very purpose of making reduction slow, just at the time when the magistrates were beginning to give welcome evidence of a quickening of conscience. Ten years have passed since that Act came into operation, and in the district I know best the result is infinitesimal. As for the Churches taking action, I am all for the aggressive policy; but nobody who has not

been through it has any conception of what the struggle means. Let me give one example. I will not mention the name of the public-house in question, but its evil reputation was notorious. The Civic Committee of Whitefield's resolved to take action. Certain of our men undertook the disagreeable duty of watching this house, and preparing themselves to give evidence. We worked in co-operation with the police, who gathered first-hand information of a most damning character. The place was the habitual resort of the worst characters in the district. Every form of vice and villainy was associated with it. The licence was continually changing hands; and the new tenant was always going to raise the standard of the place! At last our time came, and the licence was to be objected to in Court. I am not likely to forget that day. To the amazement and disgust of those of us who were present to bear witness, Counsel announced that the

evidence would not be presented, but that another chance would be given. I suppose the proceeding was quite irregular, but I went to the front and addressed the magistrates, reciting the main offences, and demanding that our objections should be considered. The magistrates retired, and being equally divided, the licence could not be renewed. Appeal was carried to Quarter Sessions, but by this time Scotland Yard had plucked up a little courage, the police evidence was produced, with the result that the licence was, of course, unhesitatingly refused. It was worth doing, I know. There was one licensed house the less amid the superfluous scores of our neighbourhood. The fight for that one licence had taken months of labour. Men had to be found whom it was safe to send into the baleful atmosphere to gather evidence. Finally we won, as it were by accident, before an evenly divided bench. If that were the only way to secure a reduc-

tion, we should all be worn out and in our graves before any great impression was made. I have mentioned the Apollo. It stood exactly opposite Whitefield's. Over the saloon were several storeys of flats; and people do not build flats over licensed premises for any respectable purposes. Again, in conjunction with the police, we watched these flats. Detectives were concealed in the towers of Whitefield's, and supplied with coffee through the night hours. Then the whole fight was adjourned to Bow Street; and in consequence every one of the flats was shut up. A little later the public-house itself closed its doors; and a little later still we had the pleasure of hiring the old bar-room for a Bible Class, which was conducted there on Sundays until we found better accommodation for it elsewhere. These were good and successful fights, and they did undoubtedly make for righteousness. But they make a terrible drain on the

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energies of those who have to wage them. Leaving aside the horrible deluge of threatening and abusive letters, the mere tax on the nervous system while the battle is on is necessarily a heavy one; and however you may look at it, the business is a hateful one. These fights ought to be possible by the simple process of constitutional procedure. A locality ought to be able to demand a reduction of twenty-five per cent. in the licensed houses, and get it by the ballot-box. The method I have described of attacking the less desirable houses individually is a makeshift and invidious method. Here is one of those social needs which demand State action, and we should have got it long ago but for the nerveless saints who cry No Politics.

In 1908 our chance came. It was a real chance, too—a chance to work a permanent transformation of many dark houses and unclean streets. We were offered a Licensing Bill which would have secured for us in a

short period of time wholesale reduction in the number of licensed houses. We should have begun to breathe again. The Licensing Bill of 1908 was the biggest instrument for social betterment ever offered us. We at Whitefield's hailed it with delight. We had the solid support of labour organisations and trade unions who had the best reason in the world for knowing how our present liquor system prejudices the cause of labour. The Whitefield's detachment that marched to Hyde Park in the great demonstration, for the Bill was a formidable one. All our speakers threw themselves with enthusiasm into the fight. It properly presented itself to us as a life and death struggle. With the Bill we believed we could redeem our neighbourhood; without it we were helpless. I am not going to detail the history of the struggle. Everybody knows that, though we came as near as we have ever come to a union of the Christian forces in this country, the House of Lords was entirely

unimpressed, and rejected the Bill with contumely. People sometimes wonder at the bitterness that is occasionally manifested by multitudes of earnest people against the House of Lords. Is there really much mystery about it when we consider how that House has shattered the brightest hopes we have ever had for a purer and more sober England? Churches are often reproached with a lack of common sense; and they would be open to the attack if they had failed to recognise then where the permanent obstacle to social reform lay. The rejection of the Licensing Bill made acute once more an old issue in British politics. It forced the Churches that really cared for social welfare further into the political field. It was clear that Cromwell's old battle against the hereditary right to rule England ill had got to be fought out again; and those of us who were proud of the Cromwellian tradition had no doubt where our duty lay.

CHAPTER IX

GREATER LONDON

IN March 1907 I stood as candidate for the London County Council, and after a very lively campaign was "snowed under" in the great storm which left only a remnant of the famous Progressive party which had ruled London for twenty years. My two opponents were Mr. George Alexander and Mr. Frank Goldsmith, who worked magnificently and won for themselves and their party a brilliant and overwhelming victory. If there is any glory attaching to the shattering of the Progressive ideal for London, they are certainly entitled to their share. The amount of money expended on this triumphant campaign against what was described as "social-

ism," must have been fabulous. The hoardings were covered with the most savage and repulsive cartoons ever exhibited in the political history of London. The suggestion of most of them was that the Progressive Council had been corrupt; and indeed these charges were openly made in some quarters, and the apology in the Law Courts only came when it was too late. But leaving aside this particular feature, which is probably regretted by all parties to-day, the campaign was an interesting one. It raised very big issues. It can hardly be disputed that the Progressive party and policy had made in an incredibly short time a new London. Called into existence at a time when disclosures of appalling corruption had made the better government of the greatest city in the world a necessity, the London County Council under its Progressive majority had shown what courage and enterprise and public spirit could do. When the party was at last

defeated with ignominy in 1907, it had the satisfaction of knowing that it had left behind it a legacy of splendid achievement for the people of London, of which not even the least intelligent of its critics could disinherit them. Everywhere on the face of modern London is the stamp of the Progressive party. Its modern bridges and tunnels, its tramways and subways, its great thoroughfare of Kingsway, its parks and open spaces, and—in 1907—its fleet of river steamers, were all so many practical illustrations of the policy of knitting London together, and giving unity to its people, as well as worthily embellishing it as a capital city. I found a useful text for speeches on London in the ancient Jewish ideal for their capital—"Jerusalem is builded as a city *that is compact together.*" The tragedy of London has been in its division into cities of the rich and cities of the poor; the financially weak having the **heaviest burdens** to carry—the financially

strong the lightest. The whole Progressive policy was an enlightened and successful endeavour to make London a great whole, and London citizenship a great fact. There was, of course, one serious drawback to the complete success of this policy. The City of London remained for the most part outside the new scheme, and certainly did not become more sympathetic as the years went by, and as the municipalisation of the great public services became an object definitely aimed at. The County Council, like every governing body that does things and does not merely talk theories, had made itself many enemies. The publicly-managed Council trams had beaten the privately-managed omnibuses; the Works department had angered the private contractor; the stricter supervision of music halls had antagonised Bohemia; the temperance policy of the Council had roused the liquor lords; the proposal to municipalise the supply of

electricity had alarmed the doctrinaire individualists; while the prospect of rating site-values had agitated the ground landlords almost to the point of delirium.

I say nothing of the undoubted unpopularity which the Progressive party achieved by what appeared to Free Churchmen to be their indecent haste to wear the shoes of the deceased School Board—shoes in which it must be said they have “rattled about” with but poor success ever since. It does not seem as if we are ever going to have again in London an education authority of the calibre and capacity of the London School Board, which was violently done to death by Mr. Balfour’s ill-omened Education Act of 1903.

Whenever this coalition army of all the vested interests can be organised and consolidated, it does undoubtedly carry everything before it. On this occasion it was most liberally financed by those who had most

to lose, and the defeat of the Progressive army was overwhelming. One cannot help remembering now, when the dust is no longer in the air and in the eyes, that the winning card was, as usual, a simple and unconditional promise to reduce the rates, which the cartoons suggested had been raised abnormally by extravagant Progressives for their own aggrandisement. Needless to say the rates were not reduced. Even the desperate policy of selling the river-steamers at a ridiculous sacrifice, and breaking up the Works Department, produced no relief. The rates continued to rise; and the unfortunate citizens of London paid more and got less than under the rule of the party which, with all its faults, had added enormously to the amenities of the city.

But does any one who knows how the poor live in London wonder that they should be panic-stricken at any prospect of increased rates? They know just enough as to how

they are governed to realise that, as a rule, their rates are included in their rent.

A municipal election is the time when they creep from their cellars and garrets to the polling-booth to vote against the rates. It is true their votes make no difference. Neither party can reduce the rates, and the more honest a candidate is the more he hesitates to promise what he knows that, as things are, he cannot perform. Some of us hold the strongest view that until we have the courage to levy a tax on site-values we shall not be able to do justice to the poorest of our tax-payers and rate-payers. But I have long ceased to wonder that the average tenement dweller should cry “A plague upon both your parties!” He looks out of his basement window, and from the one room that reeks of food and smoke, and God knows how many other smells, and wonders what local government has ever done for him that he should have to pinch and starve all his

days simply to pay his municipal dues. What does he get out of it of tangible and visible benefit?

Of course, if we had the divine gift of imagination we should see life from this man's point of view. But nobody has ever accused us of this. To such men as I have described the landlord is the Egyptian task-master for whom they toil ever, and whose shadow is across their wretched home day and night. And what do they get for it? Comfort? Health? Air? Light? Shelter? I answer, the barest minimum of these things. A man who rents a room in streets I know well rents disease. The room reeks with it. Ceiling, floor and walls are saturated with it. When we got possession of an old house for a *crèche*, and proceeded to strip the walls, the workmen found twenty wall-papers, one on the top of the other! Needless to say, the paste between had rotted and bred unspeakable things. Does any one wonder that

children go to school from such rooms with heads that are too horrible to be described? The best parents in the world, doomed to live in that room, could not prevent this. In point of fact, though everything was done that science could do to cleanse and sweeten the house I am referring to, for months we had to fight against this terrible legacy. Let the reader then multiply that house by hundreds and even thousands; let him picture for himself a house that is a warren of human habitations, with each room similar to the one I have described—and there is your housing problem, and your health problem, and your social problem, and your education problem. Somewhere, too, in the suburbs, living in fine linen and faring sumptuously every day dwells an owner of this property, who draws dividends from these insanitary rookeries; and very excellent dividends they are.

Do not let us suppose that those who live

in these dens prefer the unclean conditions of their homes. They cannot afford to spend a considerable sum on cleansing their walls, and putting in new floors. The houses that I am speaking of were once fine houses, and are now decrepit and decayed. Nothing is so depressing as a street that has “gone down.” The forlorn houses are inhabited by those who, I have no doubt, would be clean if they could, and would rather rent health than disease. But what can they do?

A little while ago a nurse from my mission was called in to a maternity case. Three little children were round the mother’s bed, and as there was but one room, they had to be turned out on to the landing. Then a fourth child was born; and that night the father, mother, baby and three older children all slept in the one bed. That is how our neighbours live in London—if it can be called living. Sometimes we say wild and desperate things; and then once again the

pietists tell us to look after these people's souls and leave politics and social conditions alone. Even the victims of bad housing themselves often ask pathetically to be left alone. The spectre of the RATES rises up before them, and they think it better to bear the ills they have than fly to others that they know not of. How can you expect those who live like this to cherish ideals of Greater London; to manifest indignation because an Admiralty Arch is muddled; or even to care that some clever and lucky tradesman's child has won a scholarship to the University?

Yet it is above all things necessary that men and women should be found to preach the Gospel of a Greater London, and to distribute equitably the cost of city improvements over the whole population according to their ability to pay. That is why the isolation of the rich "City" from the poverty-stricken districts of central London is so

manifestly unjust, and why an equalisation of rates over the whole of the Metropolis is so urgently needed. It is an inspiring thing to discover, as one does, from time to time, dark and miserable rooms which are nevertheless inhabited by civic patriotism and lighted by disinterested ideals. I remember well an old Italian, tall and straight, with grizzled grey moustache, bright eyes, and a gay smile. "I am from Pisa," he would say; and something of the dignity of his famous birthplace was with him always. Pisa had treated him none too well, if his story was true; and he made no complaint about London, not even about its weather. But he had brought with him an honourable and insuppressible pride in the beauty and fame of his native city, which made one think furiously. Why do our citizens appear to care less for London than their citizens care for Florence, or Venice, or Rome, or Pisa? Is it because we are interested mainly in a

few famous thoroughfares and buildings and have never yet begotten a civic patriotism enlightened and powerful enough to care for the back streets and obscure houses? Are we satisfied if our millionaires are richly housed in Park Lane, that their destitute neighbours should be rack-rented for the use of a cellar in St. Pancras or Soho? It is the old story. We perish for lack of vision. The cure is to breed citizens who shall be penetrated with the civic ideal. No man with the New Testament in his hand can complain of lack of guidance in the matter of citizenship. Here is Paul, the hero of the Apostolic age, boasting his *local patriotism* to the city of Tarsus, proud of its commercial and educational traditions; glorying, secondly, in his *imperial citizenship*, and looking beyond the narrow boundaries of Tarsus to the frontiers of the Roman Empire to whose civilisation and citizenship he was free-born; and, finally, claiming the supreme privilege of

his *citizenship to the kingdom of God*, his membership of a society that acknowledges no limitations of race, or tongue, or land, but exists to create a universal brotherhood on the basis of a universal righteousness. There are still thousands of excellent Christians who admire and extol Paul's devotion to the kingdom of God, who have no use for his local patriotism or his imperial citizenship. Yet the lesser flags do not challenge the supremacy of the august Standard that is the symbol of Christ's universal rule.

Coming back to the critical election which changed the form, and I think the spirit, of London government, I came to the conclusion that every minister ought to fight an election if only to see what some one calls "human nature with the paint off." You cannot possibly realise the place of the public-house in municipal politics unless you are yourself engaged in the conflict. Neither has any one the smallest conception what

bizarre and trumpery considerations determine the votes of men and women on issues that are almost infinitely great. Of course, I had to fight against the personal magnetism and deserved popularity of Mr. George Alexander; but even this electoral force was inferior to the irresistible political attraction of the bevy of beautiful actresses who escorted proud and smiling voters to the poll on election day. One dear old lady at the top of a lofty tenement building was on the register, though she had not been out of her room for years. An adroit canvasser of mine suggested that she probably had a bonnet which she had not worn out. It was a most lucky hit. She got him to reach down a bonnet-box; and sure enough out the tempting article came. She put it on, and my friend and I carried her down many flights of steps and along the streets to the polling booth. I hardly like to write what follows. I ought not to have seen, but I did distinctly

see her make a mark for my opponent! It was all with the best of intentions. We had spent much time persuading her to vote, but had not worried her about whom she was to vote for. I remember it seemed a long way up to her room again! But she bore it with the heroism of the Mother of the Gracchi.

One plague of London at election times is the writer of abusive anonymous letters. My old Literature professor, John Nichol, used cynically to say that progress is proved by the fact that you can be worried through the post for a penny, and publicly insulted on a postcard for a halfpenny. The penny letters do not matter, because you need not read them; and even when the author or authoress omits to stamp them it is worth twopence to have the satisfaction of tearing them up. But I confess, until that election, I had no idea that human beings could be capable of such foul and filthy thoughts as were written to me on postcards for the servants and children to read, and possibly also for the

benefit of the postman. At last I found myself rushing to the post-box whenever the postman's knock was heard, to prevent my own children from reading these horrible communications. Later on, one began to realise that the writers of these things are not normal, and being really lunatic are to be pitied. But there must be a considerable number of such people in London who spend their time in this ghoulish work and slink out at nights to post their ghastly missives. After all, they are a sinister product of our social life and our class divisions and bitternesses. They are less danger to society than more responsible slanderers who have a newspaper or a constituency who read it. I have had my experience of the latter kind of campaign of slander. It ended in a libel action which gave me satisfactory damages, and not only dried up for the time being the open stream of abuse, but incidentally brought pecuniary profit to some excellent institutions.

CHAPTER X

THE HOUSE OF COMMONS

THE dissolution of the greatest of all democratic parliaments in the year 1910 forced Free Churchmen and social reformers to face the constitutional issue. It may be a humiliating thing to realise, but it is none the less true that, as Mr. J. R. Green points out, most of our fundamental liberties have been won by fighting for the power of the purse.

The story of the conflict with the House of Lords over Mr. Lloyd George's famous Budget is an old story now. All that some of us cared for in 1910 was that the money for Pensions had been provided without taxing the poor man's necessities, and the House of Lords had rejected the proposal



"TAKE AWAY THAT BAUBLE."

(Cartoon by Miss E. G. Thomson.)

with contumely. The claim of the Peers to determine the financial policy of the country carried us back to the days when John Hampden broke the power of absolutism on this very question of the hereditary right to tax England apart from the consent of her representatives. No good Independent could be outside that fight. Besides, this claim by the Lords to supreme power had already meant the defeat of every proposal to give Nonconformists equal rights with Churchmen to promotion in the teaching profession; and it had meant the rejection of that measure of Licensing Reform in advocacy of which all the Christian forces of the nation had united with almost unprecedented unanimity. Now the crisis had come. If we lost this fight it was good-bye to all our hopes of getting justice for a generation or more. Let the Lords win, and the last word on Finance had passed from the House of Commons. The hard-won liberties of

Englishmen would have to be fought for over again. That great series of social questions that need for their solution the resolute assertion that the rights of human life are superior to any rights of property would be once again postponed; the cause of labour and the cause of liberty would be finally betrayed. It was a time when every man among us had to ask himself where his duty lay. The cartoon that introduces this chapter will explain better than words can what the average modern Independent thought about it all.

There has always been a sort of unwritten law against ministers of religion being members of the House of Commons ever since the Cromwellian Parliaments of 1653 and 1654. It is not easy to see why. There are literally dozens of them in the House of Lords; and it must obviously be better that if they have a voice in Parliament they should owe it not to privilege but to the desire of

the people freely expressed. More than one ex-minister of religion has attained a position of influence in the House of Commons, such as Mr. Henry Richard and Mr. Allanson Picton. But since the days of Praise-God Barebones I question whether any minister in charge of a Church had been returned as a member of Parliament until my own election in January 1910. Yet for the life of me I cannot see that there is any difference in principle between sitting on a parish council or an education authority or a board of guardians, and sitting in the legislature that deals with national affairs on a more majestic scale. All the reforms which experience had taught me were most urgently needed if Christian righteousness was to be more than a pulpit phrase and was to become an established fact, were jeopardised by the predominance of the House of Lords in the national counsels. It seemed to me then, and it seems to me now, to be at least as

much a part of my business as a democrat and a social reformer to seek to perfect the machinery through which the national conscience can express itself, as to endeavour to educate and stimulate that conscience.

When the unexpected invitation from Ipswich came to me, I could see no reason for refusing except the obvious one that I had as much work on hand as one man could reasonably undertake. As to criticism, you have to learn sooner or later that if you escape criticism it is only because you are not doing enough to deserve it. My Church and congregation, by this time, thoroughly understood the ideal which we were striving to realise. It was an extraordinary step for a minister to take, but then, as I said in my opening speech in Ipswich, it was an extraordinary crisis. Not for hundreds of years had so grave a constitutional issue been raised; and to my thinking all social progress was bound up in the decision. No govern-

ment deserves to be in power in modern England that will not seek to effect by legislation the more equitable distribution of wealth. The Budget was a courageous attempt to accomplish something in this direction, and I for one felt that it had the sanction of the principles I am proud to preach.

It would only be tedious to explain to the general reader that to those who were educated in my school of Christian thought, Christianity is bound up with democracy. We think that we can show that the "Church" is in essence a democratic institution, even as the Greek *ekklesia* was; and we think that the author of Christianity taught his disciples the practice of an austere equality which cannot be satisfied by anything short of democracy. That is our ecclesiastical position. It had historic exposition in Ireton's "Agreement of the People." It was the faith of Hampden and o

Milton and Vane. The Congregational Churches of England and America have never faltered in this faith. That is not to say that many cannot be found who enjoy our worship and our preaching, and are very welcome to membership of our society, but who do not realise or appreciate the historic witness which has made our influence great throughout the modern world. But of the general testimony of Congregationalism there has never been any question. To us any departure from democracy, whether in Church or State, is to that extent a corruption of primitive Christianity. Neither, let it be remembered, is the minister in any sense of the word a priest. He is simply a member of a Church, elected to the office of preacher and pastor by reason of certain gifts which he is believed to possess. He is not more "separate from the world" than his fellow-members; he is not less. His office in the community is not inconsistent with citizen-

ship; nay, it is not consistent with the denial of citizenship. As one whose "whole duty" it is to preach the principles of Christianity in their application to modern life, the more he understands the issues and problems of modern life the better. We are here, as Dr. Hatch said, not to follow John the Baptist into the wilderness, but Christ into the world. A minister is forbidden to be either an ascetic or a recluse. His Master was neither, and "it is well for the disciple to be as his Master."

All this is by way of explanation of our point of view to those who do not share it and who do not understand it. It may help to make clear to them how impossible it is for us who have been educated in this faith to acknowledge the old sharp distinction between the sacred and the secular. We do not think political strife is secular and ecclesiastical strife is sacred. We believe politics may be as truly sacred a task as

theology; and that how best to safeguard youth against cruelty, manhood against temptation, and human life against poverty and disease is as Christian a study as to expound the doctrine of election, the ecclesiastical use of incense, or the legitimacy of the chasuble.

Political passions, like all other passions, may be either noble or ignoble. The politician, to whatever party he may belong, who is honestly and genuinely inspired with zeal for a great cause, need never apologise for his enthusiasm. Some Churches, I know, would be ashamed to see their ministers in the thick of the fight for social betterment and political progress; but it would be well for those Churches if they never had anything worse to blush for. The darkest vices of Churches are bred not in the arena but in the convent. It is not enterprise that hurts any of us, but stagnation and apathy. No Church has ever yet perished of too great a zeal for the poor, or too sacrificial a love

of freedom. Churches will survive the mistakes they make in trying to help their fellows; what they will not survive is the attitude of detachment when the destinies of peoples are in the balance. I am the last person in this country to complain of those Christian ministers and laymen who are ardent partisans on the other side of politics. I have never been able to see any reason why the Anglican Church should not carry its banners into the political fray as it has recently been doing. It is far better to be in this business, on one side or the other, bringing some soul and conscience into the discussion of great political affairs, than to try to imitate those superior beings whom Tennyson saw in vision,

“Reclined

On the hills, like gods together
Careless of mankind.”

It was good to be in the front at this election of 1910, because the need of the hour was to talk first principles. Democracy was

challenged; and the whole progressive movement of modern England had to be debated and defended. My place was at the side of Sir Daniel Goddard, than whom no man ever had a truer and kinder colleague. Of course, as the brief days flew by, the fight waxed fast and furious; but we had no temptation to fall back on personalities: the issues were so tremendous and so supremely arresting. Let those complain who will of the exacting nature of election contests. The last men and women to grumble were those who did the hard and often thankless spade work; who, through cold wet nights in January, stood and argued on doorsteps; and who sought for votes with a pertinacity that would crown with success the labours of any minister who was equally eager and resolute to win souls.

The fact of the matter was we realised what was at stake. We knew quite well the forces that would be massed against us; but

the workmen of Ipswich were not going to sell their birthright, or fool away their chances. Before the polling-day came they had made up their minds; and though nothing could well exceed the confidence of our opponents and the elaboration of their preparations for the celebration of their triumph, when the votes were counted Ipswich was found to have returned two members pledged to establish representative government in England for all time.

When we made our way with difficulty through the exultant multitude in the market square on that eventful Saturday night, we little thought that before a year was out we should be fighting the same battle over again, and asking and receiving a final and even more decisive mandate. Yet so it was to be, owing, as everybody knows, to the lamentable and sudden death of King Edward. Most remarkable of all was the fact that the result of the second election was almost exactly the

same as the first. For myself, I was Chairman of the Congregational Union at the time. It is a high and honourable office, with onerous duties. I am sure that no chairman need ever pray to have added to his inevitable duties the fighting of two elections in one year. My good colleague, too, was laid aside in illness during the whole of the second contest. But we in Ipswich shall never forget how Mr. Lloyd George came to us on the eve of the poll and delivered two of his finest speeches, and doubtless helped not a little to add to our majority.

If anyone ever doubts the truth of the famous saying that every political question is at its roots a religious question, let him come to the House of Commons. No doubt if we in England were not so persistently and incurably religious we should be a much easier people to govern. That is why the statesman is often so impatient of those fundamental beliefs which can neither be

extinguished nor ignored. What impressed me most of all, as a new member, was the amount of time which the House of Commons devotes to arguing religious questions. Now the historic attitude of England has to be asserted on the subject of slavery, in the Congo or on the Putumayo. Now we have to reargue the whole problem of education, into which this element of religion enters so deeply. Now we are invited to discuss ecclesiastical disorders, and to suggest a remedy. Now we are plunged into the pros and cons of the Ne Temere decree, and the relations of Church and State in respect of marriage. Now the Census Bill affords a plausible pretext for raising the question of enumerating Church adherents. Now passions are aroused over proposals to modify the King's Accession Oath; now the Regency Bill revives ancient controversies over Church Establishments. Later on comes the great Home Rule issue renew-

ing in its crudest form the old "No Popery" agitation. Welsh Disestablishment is accepted as the opportunity for stating the positive argument for a Free Church in a Free State. The Scotch Temperance Bill comes to us demanded by religious men on religious grounds. The Bill for suppressing the White Slave Traffic is backed by the whole force of the Churches, and nobody can expect them to be silent on the reconstruction of the Poor Law.

I know quite well the theoretical objection raised against ministers of religion entering the House of Commons; but certainly there is no place where, so far as the subjects discussed are concerned, they are more likely to feel at home. And surely, if these subjects are definitely religious and involve for their settlement religious considerations, are there not others which may be pronounced so, unless religion and humanity have no connection with one another? What of the Bill

regulating the administration of coal mines for the superior safety and welfare of the miner? What of the Bill constituting a tribunal to which he can appeal for a fair living wage? I would add, also, what of the Bill giving to the Trades Unionist the right to protect his interests and the interests of his fellows in Parliament? Above all, what of the Bill which passed in review every class of worker in the kingdom, and took counsel for their insurance against ill-health and unemployment? The fact of the matter is, that there is no Church meeting held in this country that is more constantly and practically concerned with living religious problems than the House of Commons.

Of course, I admit that if the glass-case theory of the ministry is the true one, the House of Commons is no place for us. If the ministry is believed to confer immunity from criticism owing to the sacrosanct nature of the vocation, then it is obviously unfair

for any minister to be a member of a controversial assembly, inasmuch as he is privileged as others are not. But this notion is fortunately untenable now-a-days. The dogmatism that may not be subjected to ordinary tests of truth is no longer with us. Even in the Churches the fiat of the preacher lacks something of its old finality. His teaching must win assent from the reason and conscience of his hearers, or he will fail. In dealing with what are often unreasonably called "secular" affairs, he cannot hope or expect to derive any advantage from the nature of his calling. The most that can be said is that he brings to their discussion an experience which is not shared by everybody, an intimate knowledge of people in their homes, and the fruit of much study of those principles which most of us believe are fundamental to human progress and the stability of society. But in point of fact, no distinction can be set up as between a

Minister of Religion in the House of Commons and Bishops in the House of Lords. The Bishops invite and receive criticism sometimes caustic and severe. They certainly hit hard in debate themselves. Nobody has ever mistaken the present Bishop of St. David's for a member of the Church pacific. His coat of arms contains no dove and olive-branch. He is never so happy as when he is laying about him with his pastoral staff, nor so much at home as on the ordinary controversial party platform. If there ever was a day when surplice and lawn sleeves entitled the wearer to attack his adversaries, and protected him from any counter-attack, that day is past. We know that Bishops are just as frail, as human, as liable to error, as prone to exaggeration, and as passionately partisan as any other body of politicians who are in earnest for their cause. Nobody dreams of accepting a statement on a public question from prelate or parson

simply because it has ecclesiastical sanction. It is an entirely wholesome thing that this is so. It opens wide the door to public service, by removing the old privilege which would have prevented a minister of religion entering the arena on equal terms.

The holders of the glass-case theory of the minister, who surround him with a false idolatry, and imagine that the dear man is altogether too delicate and ethereal to descend into the hurly-burly of social and civic strife, usually have a distorted view of the House of Commons. The House of Commons is clearly not the place to which any man should go who cannot endure to be contradicted; and who has grown so accustomed to have his opinions meekly accepted, unchallenged and uncriticised, that he cannot acclimatise himself to an atmosphere in which he is the equal of all and the superior of none. But there is an ever-increasing number of ministers who are tired of the artificial insincerity of the former position,

and who welcome the latter with all its opportunities for hard rubs rather than soft speeches. At the same time I have witnessed scenes more passionately stormy in Church assemblies than in the House of Commons. The House of Commons is liable to gusts of passion; and during the last three years has been the scene of some transient outbursts of violence. Threats are occasionally heard that the few parliamentary anarchists who are to be found in its ranks will sooner or later break the machine, and by violence reduce our greatest deliberative assembly to impotence. It may be so, for it is obvious to everybody that there is still a percentage of our population uncivilised enough to prefer that disputes should be settled by methods of force than by rational methods of argument and discussion. But no student of history can ever feel that it lies in the mouth of the Church to rebuke the fierceness of secular councils. From the way some people talk you might imagine that the

historic councils of Christendom had been conducted in a calm and serene spirit, that Nicholas, Bishop of Myra, had never been suspended for striking Arius a "terrible blow on the jaw" at the Council of Trent, and that the Westminster assembly of divines had never manifested intolerance and disorder. The Church assemblies that I know best have much to learn from the House of Commons as to the courtesies of debate. The House is seldom so impatient even of the most tedious bore as to refuse him a hearing; and the occasions are seldom indeed when statements cannot be made and replies given even on the most fiercely controverted subjects with some approach to fair play on both sides. For the rest, it is here as elsewhere, that the more notorious ebullitions of feeling are the least impressive because the most obviously organised and artificial; while such exhibitions of rancour as those which once succeeded in

silencing the Prime Minister are never likely to be other than rare if only for the reason that such sustained attempts at disorder become in the long run irresistibly comic, and cover the perpetrators with ridicule.

The House of Commons has its lapses from good taste and good sense, but it remains probably the most tolerant assembly in the world, and the assembly most accessible to sincere and instructed argument. It occasionally applauds personalities, but it does not really enjoy them; while in those committee rooms where so much of its best and most important work is done, party lines are obliterated, and decisions are arrived at in a judicial temper, and on wider and more human grounds than can often be allowed to govern the decisions of our judges.

As to the vexed question of the rigour of the party machine, the only answer is that a man becomes a party hack if he makes himself so, and not unless. But I confess

myself one of those who would like to see the rule of municipal government extended to the Imperial Parliament. I think a government should govern the country for its five years; and with the exception of a few first-class measures, the principle of which is accepted by the party, decisions in the House should not be life or death decisions; nor should defeat on matters of detail involve the fate of administrations. Of course there are difficulties in the way of this procedure, as of any procedure. But it would undoubtedly tend to increase the independence, and consequently the value, of the private member; and independence of judgment is by so much the most precious asset in public life that there are few if any parliamentary inconveniences that the country might not suffer with advantage sooner than lose the character for perfect intellectual integrity and sincerity of its parliamentary representatives.

CHAPTER XI

A POSSIBLE PROGRAMME

THE first necessity is to save ourselves from insincerity. At the present time every branch of the Christian Church in England rails at other branches for their political activity. The Nonconformist gibes at the Bishops and their political influence in the second chamber. The Conformist taunts the Free Churchmen with preaching political sermons. The North of Ireland Presbyterian fulminates against Roman Catholicism because of its skill in political intrigue, and himself converts his meeting-houses into centres of political propagandism. And of course the one thing to be said is that the cry of No Politics is always hollow and unintelligent and dishonest. The people who use

the cry only mean that they do not like to hear the other man's politics. "Orthodoxy's my doxy, and heterodoxy's your doxy" is emphatically true of politics. To the Orange-man opposition to Home Rule is not politics; it is "a sacred and patriotic duty." To the Welsh Episcopalian sermons against disestablishment are not politics; they are "in defence of religion." To the Free Churchman the principle of a Free Church in a Free State is not politics; it is "New Testament Christianity." Yet we all know that these things are political issues; and we suffer in sincerity when we talk as if they were not. My plea is for more openness and frankness. Let us at least agree that politics is a great and noble science, and that no Christian citizen can afford to despise it. Let us agree that there are in front of our nation big political questions in regard to which the Church must let her mind be known, or else abdicate all claim to moral leadership. Will

any one dispute that statement? If the Church is not interested in Education, Licensing Reform, Housing, the Reconstruction of the Poor Law, a Living Wage, Divorce, the arrest of Gambling, the abolition of Slavery, and, above all, International Peace, the Church may as well disband her forces, and make an ignominious exit from the society she can no longer inspire and guide.

My suggestion is that *the Churches should agree to carve out, as it were, of the general body of political questions certain problems as to whose social and moral character there can be no dispute, and frankly claim and freely exercise the right and the duty to deal with these questions in the light of Christian ethics.* I know, of course, that you cannot prevent clergy and ministers and representative laymen praying in aid of other political causes their particular tenets. You cannot, for instance, prevent Orangemen and

Roman Catholics from preaching against or for Home Rule; nor can you, obviously, rule out Disestablishment as an issue on which nothing is to be said in Welsh churches and chapels. But these will be cases of irregulars operating outside the agreed plan of campaign. Why should it be impossible to have a Federal Church Council, representative of all organised Christian forces within these realms, whose business it should be to secure the concentration of the instructed Christian conscience on all such outstanding social and moral problems as I have indicated. It might well be that even of these questions some would prove to be, as yet, too controversial. These would have to be left over for a while. The Education tangle is a case in point; though, even there, valuable agreement might be arrived at in regard to many lines of policy. But I am certain that the result of such concerted action would be a body of social legislation of enormous value,

and a recovery by the Church of much of the moral authority which by her divisions she has lost. How much more dignified and sensible such co-operation would be than to stand like two bands of schoolboys on either side of a ditch shouting, “Yah! No Politics,” must be obvious to everybody. For better or for worse we are all subject to the laws of the land. If those laws are good it cannot be Christian to talk about them as if they were unsanctified; if they are bad it cannot be un-Christian to make them better. The worst thing for the Churches in England would be to create the suspicion that they are so intent on scoring off one another that not even for a better social order would they consent to act in cordial co-operation.

The story goes that in one of Cromwell’s Parliaments, when a measure was introduced, the mover drew his New Testament from his pocket and quoted certain passages in support of the measure. Then, the historian

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says, the other members drew their Testaments from their pockets, verified the quotations, nodded to one another that the thing was so, and the measure passed without delay. I should be sorry to return to the process of argument from isolated texts. But increasingly it ought to be the case that those measures which can make clear appeal to the spirit and teaching of the Son of Man should take their place on the statute-book. Such a Federal Church Council as I have suggested might go far to confirm that belief, and in so doing would help to exorcise the demon of party faction, and perhaps lay broad the basis on which may be erected in the future one undivided Catholic Church.

THE END

March 26, 1915

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115 Pulpit, platform and parliament, by C.
P7 Silvester Horne. London, Hodder and Stoughton
H6 [1913]
11, 216p. illus., port. 21cm.

l. Christianity and politics. I. Title.

335334

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